



ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

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Founder & Chairman of AIWF Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani addressing the opening session at the 10th Young Arab Women Leaders conference in London

Chairman's Message

As Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, I am delighted to share with you this edition of the AIWF Newsletter for March 2018. This is the first newsletter for 2018, a year in which we look forward to continuing our close collaborations with all partners and stakeholders to deliver the high-impact, action-oriented initiatives that are the hallmark of AIWF.

We especially look forward to honouring the UN's theme this year for International Women's Day, "Time is Now: Rural and Urban Activists Transforming Women's Lives", and upholding our commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals to advance women's and youth empowerment in the Arab world and beyond. This year, we also look forward to renewing our longstanding commitment to the UN Global Compact, of which AIWF is exceptionally proud to be a NGO Member, with the upcoming delivery of our second Progress Report and Communication of Continued Commitment.

As AIWF enters its seventeenth year since its launch in London in 2001 to advance gender diversity for women in the MENA region and internationally, in the workplace, in business, in academia, the media and in public service, I take this opportunity to reflect as Founder & Chairman on the achievements of our organisation over the years. As a development economist, I am very proud to have founded AIWF as a non-profit development organisation, focused on women's development and youth empowerment, prioritising job creation for Arab youth from the outset and with a special emphasis on 'Women as Engines of Economic Growth' in the Arab world.

AIWF In Action

10th Young Arab Women Leaders

The 10th YAWL on Women-Led Innovation in STEM was held on 11 December 2017 in partnership with the Royal Academy of Engineering, PwC, the World Bank, PepsiCo and Shell. The conference was a highly successful initiative that brought together 200 young leaders and innovators in STEM from across the UK and MENA region.

Full story on page 4

Upcoming AIWF Events

AIWF / World Bank Center for Mediterranean Integration Joint Conference on 'Women, Water & Youth' in September 2018 in Amman, Jordan

AIWF will host a Joint Conference with the World Bank Center for Mediterranean Integration on 'Women, Water & Youth' in September 2018 in Amman, Jordan. The conference will take an intersectional approach to three critical development challenges for the MENA region – water scarcity, women's economic participation, and youth unemployment, and aims to provide a platform for stakeholders most affected by water and food insecurity, armed conflict and displacement, and reduced economic opportunity to address region-specific environmental challenges whilst promoting women's leadership in these areas.

To register your interest in attending this conference in Amman, please contact the AIWF office in London.

AIWF works closely with a global network of corporate and institutional partners to promote and prioritise the engagement of women and youth towards finding innovative and actionable solutions to the multi-faceted and complex environmental, economic security, and developmental challenges the MENA region faces. Today, AIWF is recognised as a key actor in the international development community for our groundbreaking, timely, and results-driven initiatives that have brought civil society, the corporate sector, governments, media and academia together to action progress and change for women and youth across the Arab world. International conferences held over the past 17 years in London, Paris, Dubai, Doha, Damascus, Washington DC, Madrid, Brussels, Sharjah, Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Palestine, Kuwait and Morocco have examined strategies for job creation, inclusive sustainable development, the role of women as engines of economic growth, women's peace and security, economic competitiveness, early stage entrepreneurship in the MENA region, and women-led innovation in STEM.

As we progress into 2018, it is an excellent time to share with pride the exciting initiatives that AIWF is now actively engaged in planning for the year ahead, and to update on both my past year at Harvard and my recent appointment to the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work.

As many of you will already know, I recently completed a transformational, year-long Fellowship of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative (ALI). I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation to **Rania Rizk**, SVP & General Counsel AMENA, PepsiCo, and valued AIWF Board Member, for her leadership of AIWF as Acting Chairman throughout 2017. I also wish to thank the distinguished AIWF Board for all their support over the year, which enabled me to pursue the Harvard Fellowship and to spend 2017 in Cambridge, MA to undertake the intensive, year-long programme, joining 46 distinguished global leaders to research and address significant societal problems.

During my time at Harvard, I continually worked to promote AIWF's many successes as part of the international development community and to strengthen key existing and new relationships on behalf of AIWF with the Arab, American and international academic, philanthropic and entrepreneurial communities both at Harvard and in Washington DC. While at Harvard, it was a pleasure to speak at a number of conferences as well as to the distinguished Fellows of the Edward S Mason Fellowship Programme, sharing success stories of Arab women leaders and the many exciting developments for women in the MENA region with the

international student community at Harvard. Many of the participants commented to me afterwards that my remarks had successfully challenged stereotypes they had previously held with regards to the status and situation of Arab women, and that they were surprised and delighted to hear of the many role models coming from the region who are leading the way forward across all sectors and at all levels of business and public life.



Haifa Al Kaylani receiving her certificate of completion at the conclusion of her year-long Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative Fellowship 2017

It was truly an honour for me to be at Harvard as a Fellow of the ALI, and to have had such an exceptional opportunity to pursue in great depth my keen interest as a development economist in food-water-energy security challenges, which are of great concern to many developing regions in the world and in particular to the MENA region. My year at Harvard as a Fellow and a member of the ALI Coalition has been truly inspiring and life-changing, and I now look forward to joining the nine past cohorts of ALI Fellows as we become members of the global Harvard alumni and effect change in our various disciplines and in our many countries around the world.

I also now look ahead to implementing the key outcome of my ALI Fellowship, my Harvard ALI Special Project, which I will be launching in Jordan this year, titled **Ploughing New Ground: Sustainable Agriculture in the MENA Region Jordan Project**. The project provides an innovative model for sustainable development through agriculture and aims to revive a critical sector in the MENA region, sustainable agriculture, to enhance food security, conserve scarce water resources, and create job opportunities for local communities. I am very proud to share that it has already gained support in Jordan following my visits last year and in early 2018 to the Ministers of Water, Agriculture and Social Development, from the local farming communities, as well as multinationals such as PwC in preparing the project feasibility study; PepsiCo, already deeply involved in agribusiness in the region; and the World Bank, which I am proud to share has agreed to provide support for the project.

Finding innovative, viable strategies to boost job creation through sustainable agriculture, especially for women and youth in rural communities and in countries where water scarcity represents a critical developmental and environmental challenge, is a key priority for AIWF in the year ahead. Indeed, adapting to new technologies and meeting unprecedented challenges head on was a recurring theme in much of AIWF's outreach last year, and examining the changing world of work and its impact on women and youth is of course a key priority for me personally with my August 2017 appointment to the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work. I am honoured to have been appointed to this Commission and to have the opportunity to contribute to this timely and valuable ILO Centenary Initiative under the joint chairmanship of Prime Minister of Sweden, **Stefan Löfven**, and the President of Mauritius, **HE Dr Ameenah Gurib-Fakim**.

The ILO launched the Global Commission on the Future of Work, a high-level international body to address the challenges of the rapidly transforming world of work, in Geneva on 22 August 2017 in the presence of the Commission Co-Chairs. Since then, the Commission has been engaged in undertaking an in-depth examination of the future of work that can provide the analytical basis for the delivery of social justice in the 21st century. The Commission will focus in particular on the relationship between work and society, the challenge of creating decent jobs for all, the organisation of work and production, and the governance of work, towards the development of a Commission Report which will be submitted to the ILO's Centenary International Labour Conference in 2019.

The Global Commission on the Future of Work held its inaugural meeting in Geneva on 22 October 2017, which I flew to Switzerland from the United States to attend, and its second meeting in February 2018. Both meetings featured in-depth deliberations of the main forces shaping the world of work, opportunities to be leveraged and challenges to be addressed for a future of work with social justice to be secured. The 28-member Commission looked at the so-called "mega drivers of change" – technology, demography, climate change and globalization. They also focused on a number of more specific issues, including the changing role of women in the workforce, the importance of education and skills, the relationships between poverty, inequality and informality in the world of work, the prospects for youth, the role of businesses, employers and trade unions, and the evolving values and preferences in societies that will have an impact on the world of work. The Commission emphasises the need to generate action and impact on key world of work issues which are at the centre of societal concerns around the world, which are also

key development concerns of the AIWF Board and our partners and stakeholders.

The changing workplace, the impact of automation and gender diversity in the workplace, especially the critical STEM sectors, resoundingly emerged as key themes of the 10th *Young Arab Women Leaders conference*, which I was proud to be back in London to chair in December 2017. The conference was titled 'Women-Led Innovation in STEM', was held at and in partnership with the Royal Academy of Engineering, and was a phenomenal success for AIWF, initiative founding partner PwC, valued supporting partners PepsiCo and Shell, and indeed for the World Bank as valued Conference Partner for this very special event. AIWF was delighted to welcome **Dr Hayat Sindi**, a leading Saudi bio-scientist and entrepreneur who serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of the UN Secretary-General and as Advisor to the President of the Islamic Development Bank, as Guest of Honour Keynote Speaker, and to have the high-level attendance of the World Bank on this special occasion, welcoming **Blanca Moreno-Dodson**, Head of the World Bank's Center for Mediterranean Integration, and **Dr Afef Haddad**, Deputy to the Country Director, Maghreb and Malta, The World Bank.

As a direct outcome of AIWF's collaboration with the World Bank on the December *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference, AIWF and the World Bank's Center for Mediterranean Integration are now engaged in preparations for a high-level joint conference to be held in Amman, Jordan, in September 2018. This timely and much-needed conference, titled 'Women, Water & Youth', will take an intersectional approach to three critical development challenges for the MENA region – water scarcity, women's economic participation, and youth unemployment. The conference aims to bring the powerful voices of women – most affected by water challenges, food insecurity, armed conflict and displacement, and reduced economic opportunity – into the conversation. It will also bring vital youth voices to the table to explore ways in which women-led / targeted, and youth-led / targeted initiatives might solve environmental and sustainability challenges whilst simultaneously promoting women's economic participation and leadership and addressing the crisis of youth unemployment in the region.

These were key themes discussed at the recent AIWF Board and Global Partners Meeting 2018, which I was proud to chair at the Dubai offices of AIWF's valued Global Benefactor Partner, PepsiCo. It was an excellent opportunity for the AIWF Board to review the highly successful programme of events AIWF delivered in 2017, among them: the 9th *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference in Fez, which overlapped with

AIWF's Special Visit to Morocco (16-21 April 2017); the 3rd AIWF-IBA *Women Business Lawyers Initiative* (bringing together the IBA and AIWF's law firm partner Boodle Hartfield to examine strategies for 'Advancing gender diversity in law and the professions'); and the 10th *Young Arab Women Leaders Conference* on 'Women-Led Innovation in STEM' at the Royal Academy of Engineering. AIWF also supported the '1 AM' art exhibition in central London in July 2017 as a Lead Sponsor of this important and timely celebration of Middle Eastern art, and we look forward to further opportunities to support cultural events in 2018 that promote Arab creativity and culture.



Members of the AIWF Board at the Annual Board and Global Partners Meeting in Dubai in January 2018

The Board also shaped the programme for the year ahead, agreeing to take forward the highly successful *Young Arab Women Leaders* initiative that AIWF founded jointly with PwC in 2011, and to bring into focus key environmental challenges in the region with the high-level conference planned in Amman, Jordan in September 2018 in partnership with the World Bank Center for Mediterranean Integration on 'Women, Water & Youth'. I am also delighted to announce that following the Board Meeting, **Rania Rizk** accepted the invitation of the Board to serve as Co-Chair of the Arab International Women's Forum effective January 2018.

Following the AIWF Board Meeting, the AIWF Annual Partners Meeting was attended by the AIWF Board and Global Partners, providing us with the opportunity to thank all AIWF Global Partners for their invaluable support of all AIWF initiatives and events over what was a highly successful year for AIWF. It was also an opportunity to gain valuable feedback from attending Partners, as well as to learn about and discuss the valued current initiatives and objectives of all AIWF Global Partners looking forward.

Over the years, AIWF has gone from strength to strength, responding to emerging challenges from the MENA region as they develop. In the year ahead, AIWF and all AIWF Global Partners are committed to growing our powerful platform for women leaders,

entrepreneurs, executives and educators to voice and examine critical issues of global and regional concern that deeply impact women's lives, their livelihoods and their security and prosperity. We look forward to working with all partners and stakeholders, bringing Arab governments, the private sector, civil society, women and youth together to innovate new solutions for the key developmental challenges in the MENA region and to better understand how these challenges impact the lives of women and young people. We hope that you will join us on the exciting journey ahead in 2018, as Partners, Members and Friends of the Arab International Women's Forum.

Haifa Al Kaylani

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani

Founder & Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum
Fellow, Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative 2017
Commissioner, ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work

AIWF holds 10th successful *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference on 'Women Led Innovation in STEM' at the Royal Academy of Engineering in London

The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) held a highly successful 10th edition of the *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference series on 11 December 2017 in London on 'Women Led Innovation in STEM', in partnership with the **Royal Academy of Engineering**, **PwC** and the **World Bank**, and with the valued support of **PepsiCo** and **Shell**.

AIWF and PwC jointly launched the *Young Arab Women Leaders* initiative in London in 2011 as a platform to bring women leaders and mentors from government, business, and civil society together with women who aspire to community, business and political leadership. Six years on, *Young Arab Women Leaders* is one of AIWF's keystone empowerment initiatives which to date, has welcomed over 2,500 young women leaders to conferences held thus far in events in Amman, Beirut and Dubai in 2012, Palestine in 2013, London in 2014, Doha in 2015, Kuwait City in 2016, and Fez, Morocco in early 2017.

The 10th *Young Arab Women Leaders* 'Women Led Innovation in STEM' conference was designed to promote the development of leadership skills and confidence in the next generation of young women leaders in STEM, welcoming over 200 guests and delegates from over 40 different countries including the US, UK, the EU and the Arab States.

The conference was hosted at and in valued partnership with the **Royal Academy of Engineering** in London as Host Partner, and AIWF was proud to continue its longstanding partnership with **PwC** and all AIWF Global Partners to further scale the initiative and celebrate this important milestone in London, the city in which *Young Arab Women Leaders* was first launched.

“As a founding partner of the Young Arab Women Leaders initiative, we are proud to support AIWF in driving that same vision of creating more opportunities for our next generation of women leaders and drive gender diversity, top to bottom.”

Hani Ashkar, Territory Senior Partner at PwC Middle East

For this conference, AIWF, PwC and the Royal Academy of Engineering enjoyed the partnership and support of the **World Bank**, building on past collaborations between AIWF and the World Bank to bring into focus challenges and opportunities for STEM women leaders in the MENA region, the UK, EU and internationally. AIWF Benefactor Partner **PepsiCo** and AIWF Global Partner **Shell** also lent valued support to ‘Women Led Innovation in STEM’ as Conference Networking Partners.

Conference sessions were aligned with the core priority policy areas of AIWF, the Royal Academy of Engineering, PwC, and the World Bank, and included:

- **Educating and empowering the next generation of STEM women leaders**
- **Women-led innovation and new solutions to the global energy, food, water, and climate change crises**
- **Women-led innovation in medical technologies and healthcare AI**
- **Supporting diversity, inclusion and innovation in energy, engineering, and infrastructure**
- **Advancing gender diversity in tech entrepreneurship and the digital economy**

The conference Opening Session was addressed by **Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani**, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women’s Forum, Fellow of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative and Commissioner on the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work; **Philip Greenish CBE**, CEO of the Royal Academy of Engineering; **Blanca Moreno-Dodson**, Head of the Center for Mediterranean Integration,

The World Bank; **Dr Hayat Sindi**, Founder and President, Institute for Imagination and Ingenuity (i2institute), Co-founder & Director, Diagnostics for All, Scientific Advisory Board of the UN Secretary-General and Advisor to the President of the Islamic Development Bank; and **Pam Jackson**, Regional Deals Leader, PwC Middle East.



Saudi bioscientist and entrepreneur Dr Hayat Sindi addressing the 10th Young Arab Women Leaders conference in London

In her Opening Keynote, Mrs Al Kaylani cited education as one of the Arab world’s most important success stories, and said: “For many Arab women, not only has education enhanced economic opportunity and engagement, it has helped move gender diversity forward in the region, it has lifted families out of poverty and broken the cycle of under-privilege, deprivation and disenfranchisement.” In almost every MENA country, women are graduating from universities in far greater numbers than men and in subjects such as computer science, engineering and law, in what the World Bank has called a ‘reverse gender gap’. In some Arab countries, the ratio of women to men studying STEM subjects at university is 2:1. In the GCC, as many as 60% of engineering students in some universities are female, compared with 30% in the United States and Europe, according to UNESCO. In many of the oil-rich nations as well as Jordan and Palestine, girls out-perform boys in maths, and in Saudi, girls have long out-performed boys in science for decades according to the World Bank report on *Equality of Opportunity in Education in the Middle East and North Africa*. In 10 Arab countries surveyed by UNESCO, women graduating in STEM subjects represented between 34% to 57% of graduates - much higher than any country outside of the Arab world.



Young Arab Women Leaders Conference in London - Advancing gender diversity in tech entrepreneurship and the digital economy

Mrs Al Kaylani discussed empowerment barriers for women in STEM and called for a “narrowing of the knowledge gap by educating more young women in the sciences, and eliminating diversity barriers for women’s participation and leadership in STEM to close the participation gap”. She said: “In STEM in particular, there are more nuanced barriers to female participation to be addressed. These include the dominance of male staff at the higher levels and a lack of mainstream role models for young women in STEM or rather, the low visibility of successful women in STEM in the media. We must look for more ways to bring the best and brightest women leaders together and work harder to elevate the profile of successful role models who will inspire the next generation of STEM women leaders. In our experience, this can be achieved with advanced mentorship and networking programmes that specifically aim to enhance the capacity and support the progression of women in the field.”



Philip Greenish CBE, CEO of the Royal Academy of Engineering, addressing the 10th Young Arab Women Leaders conference in London



Blanca Moreno-Dodson, Head of the World Bank Center for Mediterranean Integration, engaging in discussion at the 10th Young Arab Women Leaders conference in London



Nicola Ehlermann, Head of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme, participating at the 10th Young Arab Women Leaders conference in London

Philip Greenish CBE, then-CEO of the Royal Academy of Engineering, welcomed the gathering to the RAEng and reiterated how proud the Academy was to welcome such diverse and highly accomplished panel speakers. In her keynote address, **Blanca Moreno-Dodson**, Head of the World Bank Centre for Mediterranean Integration, outlined the mission of the CMI, a multi-partner platform for development agencies, Governments, local authorities and civil society from around the Mediterranean to convene and exchange knowledge, discuss public policies, and identify solutions to key challenges facing the Mediterranean region. Through innovative solutions, the CMI aims to help countries achieve transformative reforms and enhance integration in the Mediterranean region, with youth as the CMI’s overarching theme. AIWF was delighted to have the partnership and support of the World Bank on this occasion, building on numerous past collaborations between AIWF and the World Bank over the last decade since the World Bank hosted the AIWF Annual Conference at its headquarters in Washington DC in 2008.

“We are delighted to have welcomed distinguished speakers and delegates to the Royal Academy of Engineering in London for what was undoubtedly a unique and exceptional opportunity for established and emerging women leaders in STEM to develop new competencies, new connections and engage in valuable dialogue with each other.” Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women’s Forum

Dr Hayat Sindi, Founder and President, Institute for Imagination and Ingenuity (i2institute), Co-founder & Director, Diagnostics for All, Scientific Advisory Board of the UN Secretary-General and Advisor to the President of the Islamic Development Bank, delivered the Keynote Address as Guest of Honour, conveying her support for the AIWF mission to empower and develop women innovators across the STEM sectors. Driven by her desire to more closely link science and social impact, Dr Sindi co-founded a non-profit organisation with a team at Harvard, ‘Diagnostics for All’, which creates innovative, inexpensive, point-of-care diagnostic devices for people in impoverished regions. At the heart of Dr Sindi’s innovation lies a passion to develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Middle East that transcends existing gaps between education and opportunity. In 2011, she launched

i2, the Institute for imagination and Ingenuity, to encourage innovation among young people specifically male and female scientists, technologists and engineers. Through fellowships, trainings and mentorships, i2 seeks to empower and inspire the next generation of innovators so that they may realize their dreams and ultimately contribute to Saudi Arabia's growing economy. In 2013, Dr Sindi was one of the first 30 women to be appointed to the Saudi Arabia's highest consultative body, the Shura Council, and is one of 25 global experts selected by United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki Moon as members of the newly constituted UN Scientific Advisory Board providing advice to the UN's leadership on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. Dr Sindi is also a Goodwill Ambassador for Sciences at UNESCO, and has participated in numerous events aimed at raising the awareness of science amongst women, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the Muslim World.

Pam Jackson, Regional Deals Leader, PwC Middle East, then concluded the Opening Session with her Keynote as Conference Partner on this occasion, outlining PwC's commitment to advancing gender diversity in the male-dominated tech and broader STEM sectors and introducing the first panel session. As with previous editions, all five panels of the *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference in London were designed to be highly interactive, with valuable personal strategies and experiences shared between speakers and delegates and between emerging and established leaders in STEM.

AIWF was proud to welcome among the conference participants some of the UK's leading women executives, young professionals, academics, representatives of media, government and civil society – all successful, motivated, talented and truly inspirational women leaders in STEM who provided valuable inspiration, mentorship and insight through their interventions, representing multinationals in the private sector, NGOs, social enterprises and world leading universities including the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, and Imperial College London.

Panels explored critical topics ranging from STEM education; responses to the global energy, food, water, and climate change crises; women's advancement in medical technologies and the exciting and rapidly growing area of healthcare AI; opportunities and challenges for women leaders in energy, engineering and infrastructure; and navigating the realities of tech entrepreneurship and the digital economy to pave the way for women innovators in blockchain, big data, and the internet of things.



Young Arab Women Leaders Conference in London - Educating and empowering the next generation of STEM women leaders



Young Arab Women Leaders Conference in London - Women-led innovation in medical technologies and healthcare AI



Young Arab Women Leaders Conference in London - Women-Led Innovation and Solutions to Global Food, Water and Climate Change Crises

Dr Hayaatun Sillem, who was appointed CEO of the Royal Academy of Engineering effective January 2018, delivered the day's Closing Remarks at the conclusion of the fifth and final panel. She said: "The Royal Academy of Engineering has a vision of an inclusive engineering profession that inspires, attracts and retains people from all walks of life. It wholeheartedly supports events such as this to encourage the next generation of diverse leaders." According to Dr Sillem, only 9% of UK engineers are women and 6% are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. Recent Royal Academy of Engineering research shows that both these groups experience the culture of engineering as less inclusive than white and male engineers do. For this reason, the Academy works collectively to address barriers faced by under-represented groups by bringing together employers, professional institutions and others through its Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Programme.

Dr Sillem said: "As a national Academy with a global outlook, it's also crucial that we learn from similar efforts around the world and share our insights and approaches with international partners. We are proud to have welcomed these talented women from across the UK, the Middle East and North Africa to London in December."

In both the Arab world and in the UK, new opportunities in STEM are being driven by women leaders with the passion, ideas, confidence and skills to launch new platforms, drive new projects, and work productively and collaboratively. AIWF's Benefactor Partner PepsiCo and all AIWF Global Partners in the STEM sectors, including PwC, Shell and Pfizer (among others), are wholly committed to recruiting, training and retaining the best STEM talent in the region and internationally, and equally to supporting initiatives such as *Young Arab Women Leaders* which aim to develop women's confidence, leadership and entrepreneurial skills, and STEM proficiency.

AIWF is deeply appreciative of the invaluable efforts of all AIWF Global Partners and looks forward to building on the success of 'Women-Led Innovation in STEM' in 2018 to support women leaders in STEM to develop new competencies, new connections and engage in valuable dialogue with each other. AIWF will work closely with all stakeholders to follow up in future programmes and initiatives on the key recommendations and impact-driven action points delivered in the day's deliberations.

AIWF congratulates Founder Board Member Sylvia Perry on receiving the distinguished award of the BPW International Badge of Honour

AIWF extends its warmest congratulations to **Sylvia Perry**, AIWF Founder Board Member, who was awarded the BPW International Badge of Honour in her role as past International President, BPW International, by the 2014 – 2017 BPW International President, **Dr Yasmin Darwich**. Mrs Perry received the award at the XXIX BPW International Congress held in Cairo, Egypt, under the patronage of **HE Abdel Fattah Al Sisi**, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt with 650 people attending from 73 countries.

The Badge of Honour is awarded to an individual who has shown a strong commitment to the philosophies of BPW and has participated in activities to improve the Status of Women. Sylvia already holds the Lena Madesin Phillips Award, which commemorates the leadership and dedication inspired by Dr Lena Madesin Phillips, the organisation's founder, for having made a



Sylvia Perry with the President, Yasmin Darwich and Executive, BPW International after being awarded the BPW International Badge of Honour

significant contribution to the development of BPW at international level.

In addition to her three and a half years as International President (1996 – 1999), Sylvia has served BPW International in many roles, having been National President in the UK, European Coordinator and chair of many of its key committees as well as leading programmes on equity, eliminating violence against women and children, education and training. Currently, she chairs the Constitutional Advisory Committee and in that capacity made a significant contribution to the XXIX Congress, chairing sessions on motions.

A significant area of her interest and work has been the representation at various United Nations conferences, BPW International having been granted consultative status by ECOSOC in 1947. A highlight was attending the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Therefore, it was a great pleasure for Sylvia to be able to host **HE The Honourable Gertrude Mongella** (who had been the Secretary General of the Beijing Conference) at the Cairo BPW International Congress, at which she was a special guest in her role as First President of Pan-African Parliament.

Sylvia takes a great interest in helping young people and for that reason was much involved in the launch and early development of AIWF's *Young Arab Women Leaders* initiative. Sylvia has also spent much of her time encouraging the skills and abilities of *Young BPW*, a programme for BPW members under 35 years old which concentrates on their training and self-development.

The ending of the XXIX Congress brought another landmark for BPW when AIWF supporter, **Dr Amany Asfour**, medical doctor, scientist and lecturer in Cairo was elected the next International President, the first woman from Egypt and the Arab world to hold that role.

AIWF pays tribute to valued Board Member and eminent political economist Professor Jean-Pierre Lehmann



The late Jean-Pierre Lehmann, Professor Emeritus of International Political Economy, Founder of the Evian Group, and distinguished member of the AIWF Board

AIWF was greatly saddened to have received the news of the passing of **Jean-Pierre Lehmann**, Professor Emeritus of International Political Economy, Founder of the Evian Group, and distinguished member of the AIWF Board, on 21 December in Lausanne, Switzerland.

A Member of the AIWF Board from 2012, Jean-Pierre was wholly devoted to the AIWF mission to break down barriers and support women and young people in the economy and in business, in the Arab world and internationally. Jean-Pierre fully endorsed the AIWF *Young Arab Women Leaders* initiative that aims to serve as a platform for young women aspiring to leadership in business and public service, and he was a distinguished guest speaker lending his invaluable expertise and insight at the May 2013 conference at Birzeit University, West Bank, Palestine. In his keynote address, titled *Women, Growth and Development: Are there lessons from East Asia for the Arab World?*, Jean-Pierre called it “an incontestable point ... that there is a direct correlation between the social status of women and the level of national economic development”, and stated that the importance of educating women would resound in the “transmission and legacies bequeathed to the next generations”.

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, paid tribute to Jean-Pierre Lehmann in the following statement: “AIWF is deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved and valued Board Member Jean-Pierre, who was a mentor and friend to me personally and to all of us at the Arab International Women's Forum. We will always remember Jean-Pierre with the utmost fondness, respect and gratitude for all his important work to better the lives of young people globally through inclusive world trade, development and global governance, and his thought leadership on the role of business in reducing poverty and inequality, especially for women and young people. All of us at AIWF will keenly miss his presence and his immensely valued expertise on the many areas of shared concern, and we will honour Jean-Pierre's memory by carrying forward his values and dedication to achieving a more diverse and equitable working world in all our future programmes.”

“AIWF will honour Jean-Pierre's memory by carrying forward his values and dedication to achieving a more diverse and equitable working world.”

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

Rania Rizk, AIWF Board Member, SVP & General Counsel PepsiCo AMENA, said: “Jean-Pierre Lehmann will be deeply missed by the members of the AIWF Board and all of us in the international community who were greatly inspired and influenced by his work, his teaching and his thought leadership on critical economic development issues. ”

Nadereh Chamlou, AIWF Board Member and former Senior Advisor to the World Bank, remembered Jean-Pierre as an “intellectual who strived to create a better and more just world”. She said: “I met Jean-Pierre Lehmann for the first time at the Board Meeting of AIWF in Amman in spring of 2013. Following the Board meeting, we traveled by car to the King Hussein Crossing in order to reach Ramallah, where AIWF held its *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference, its first in Palestine, at the Birzeit University. We began to chat on a range of matters, from world affairs, to supporting a young generation of capable and learned global citizens. He was an intellectual who strived to create a better and more just world.”

Jean-Pierre Lehmann is survived by his wife of over 49 years, Françoise, as well as his three children and seven grandchildren.

PepsiCo proud to lead the way for women in STEM

The Arab International Women's Forum wishes to extend a special acknowledgment and deepest appreciation to Global Benefactor Partner PepsiCo for its valued support of the AIWF mission, and for its longstanding partnership with AIWF on all our work and programmes.

PepsiCo is always proud to talk about the many ways in which we support diversity and inclusion, and to discuss how capabilities and success transcend perceived gender limitations. One perfect example of breaking the so-called glass ceiling is **Delel Chaabouni**, Chief Information Officer (CIO) for PepsiCo Middle East and North Africa. She has forged a name for herself as a leader in the fields of innovation, fourth industrial revolution, and digital transformation – and still finds time to advocate for women who aspire to careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Delel has proven time and again that knowledge is not limited by gender by representing PepsiCo at high-level events, such as DIGITRANS – The Digital Transformation Forum, the Future Manufacturing and Trade Summit, and the Arab International Women's Forum 10th *Young Arab Women Leaders: Women-Led Innovation in STEM* event.

“We need to build awareness of the accomplishments achieved by women in the STEM fields. The creation of role models within these industries will deliver a tangible platform to bridge the gender gap, providing young women with the encouragement they need to study STEM subjects and embark upon a career in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.”

Delel Chaabouni, Chief Information Officer (CIO) for PepsiCo Middle East and North Africa

Two of these events (DIGITRANS and the Future Manufacturing and Trade Summit) had one thing in common: Delel was one of just a handful of women participants, and the only female on her panels. The AIWF *Young Arab Women Leaders: Women-Led Innovation in STEM* conference, on the other



Delel Chaabouni, Chief Information Officer (CIO) for PepsiCo Middle East and North Africa

hand, promoted all-female panels of STEM women innovators who are leading the way forward in their disciplines and breaking new ground for women's leadership in the STEM sectors.

Given gender imbalances in the fields of science and technology, the low visibility of women in STEM isn't surprising; women are less likely to enter and more likely to leave STEM careers, according to a recent study by UNESCO. Globally, only around 30 per cent of female students select STEM-related fields in higher education, but statistics show that girls significantly out-perform boys in the primary education fields of mathematics and science, particularly in the GCC countries. So why aren't there more women like Delel, leading the way in STEM careers?

At some point along the line, statistics make it easy to assume that women lose interest in STEM careers. It could be due to cultural pressures, gender expectations, stereotyping, inhospitable workplaces, or any number of reasons. And yet, Delel is proof that women are capable of succeeding in the STEM industries. She serves as a role model for women, and as an inspiration for those who wish to pursue the career their hearts and minds are set on, eschewing whatever gender-related stigmas there may be associated with them.

According to Delel, “we need to build awareness of the accomplishments achieved by women in the STEM fields. The creation of role models within these industries will deliver a tangible platform to bridge the gender gap, providing young women with the encouragement they need to study STEM subjects and embark upon a career in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Righting the imbalance will prove beneficial to communities and will contribute to economic growth.”

By representing a global company on the international stage as a leader in traditionally 'male' fields, Delel not only does PepsiCo proud, but sets a shining example that women can do more than just achieve successful careers in whatever field they put their minds to; they can lead in them, too.

AIWF Global & Institutional Partners

The Arab International Women's Forum wishes to acknowledge our Global Partners who share the AIWF mission and whose endorsement, cooperation and participation helps AIWF to activate its agenda for business growth, change and development for women in the MENA region and beyond. AIWF is proud to have the confidence of our Benefactor Partner **PepsiCo**, and the support of all Global Partners on this occasion and on all AIWF initiatives.

AIWF Benefactor Partner



AIWF Global Platinum Partners



AIWF Global Diamond Partners



AIWF Institutional Partners



AIWF Global Communications Partner



“Time is Now: Rural and Urban Activists Transforming Women’s Lives” A Special Message from the AIWF Chairman

UN Women’s chosen theme for International Women’s Day 2018, **“Time is Now: Rural and Urban Activists Transforming Women’s Lives”**, follows a year in which much of the Arab world saw phenomenal progress in women’s leadership throughout the region in many formal, developed, and information-based sectors, but still significant improvement is required in addressing the challenges and disempowerment of women and young people in the rural and informal economies.

In 2017, as a result of women’s increased participation in policymaking across the region, legal reforms were celebrated across many of the MENA countries, especially in Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia – which recently passed a landmark law to protect women from domestic violence, and Egypt – which passed a law granting women inheritance rights on an equal basis with men. The UAE is leading the way in improving maternity leave rights for working mothers and has recently launched high-level Ministries led by women, including the world’s only Ministry of Happiness and the Ministry of Food Security. Jordan recently appointed its first female judge to the Supreme Court, **Judge Ihsan Barakat**, in what is a major breakthrough for women in the legal profession and the judiciary in the Arab world (Judge Barakat was also the first woman to serve as Amman’s Attorney General). And women in Saudi Arabia are now able to attend public events at sports arenas, drive and serve in the military.

In my view, the key to the Arab world’s progress has been education, which could well be the region’s success story and the key to its future prosperity. At higher and advanced education level, in almost every MENA country, Arab women are graduating from Arab universities in far greater numbers than men and in subjects such as computer science, engineering and law, in what the World Bank has called a ‘reverse gender gap’. For many Arab women, not only has education enhanced economic opportunity and engagement, it has helped move gender equality forward in the region, it has lifted families out of poverty and broken the cycle of under-privilege, deprivation and disenfranchisement.

Notwithstanding the undeniable progress that has been made in most MENA states, as the ILO notes in its World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2017 report, women in North Africa are still twice as likely to be unemployed as their male counterparts, unemployment for women in the Arab States is still 13 percentage points higher than that for men, and female participation in the labour market remained the lowest



Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani Founder & Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum; Fellow, Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative 2017; Commissioner, ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work

globally at just 21.2% in 2016, against a world average of 49.5%. As the ILO has found: “Such large gender disparities in labour market performance undoubtedly highlight the fact that although women have achieved high levels of education, this has not translated into their inclusion in the world of work.”

The World Bank estimates that legal and business barriers are presenting the most serious barriers to women joining the labour force in MENA, causing an estimated loss of 27% in income for the region overall. Every MENA economy has at least one restriction on the type of work a woman can do, and Morocco is the only country where it’s prohibited by law to discriminate against women when giving them access to credit. Morocco and Djibouti are the only countries that legally mandate equal remuneration for equal work and non-discrimination based on gender in hiring for jobs, and Algeria legally mandates equal remuneration for equal work.

Gender barriers to women’s inclusion are also reflected in the low rates of female-led entrepreneurship in the MENA region, with the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor’s (GEM) MENA 2017 Report identifying barriers as: women having higher levels of domestic responsibility, lower levels of education, a lack of female role models in business and public service, fewer business-orientated networks in Arab communities, a lack of capital and assets, and a “culturally-induced lack of assertiveness and confidence” in women’s abilities to succeed in business, entrepreneurship and professional life. Women in the rural sector face the most significant gender disparity, a situation that the ILO describes as “the ever-present challenge”. Women living and working in rural economies are often perceived to be and treated as second-class citizens, but despite



The programme for AIWF's 9th Young Arab Women Leaders conference held in April 2017 in Fez, Morocco, was designed to highlight opportunities and challenges for women in the private sector, entrepreneurship and in the rural economy, with a special focus on supporting social enterprise, innovative education models and skills development initiatives.

the low level of recognition given to their work, their socio-economic contribution to the welfare of their households and communities is immense. According to the ILO, around 70% of the world's poor live in rural communities that rely heavily on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock. Within these communities, women and young girls, "the poorest of the poor", typically lack regular, viable, decent employment, face hunger and malnutrition, poor access to health, education and productive assets.

As the ILO finds: "Although gender inequality varies considerably across regions and sectors, there is evidence that, globally, women benefit less from rural employment, whether in self- or wage-employment, than men do", with 25% less pay than men and women also shouldering much of the burden of unpaid work which is neither valued nor remunerated. Gender inequality in rural economies exist because of the "interlinked social, economic and political factors" but mostly because of "the invisible but powerful role of social institutions that disempower one sex above the other" which include "traditions, customs and social norms that govern the intricate workings of rural societies, and which act as a constraint on women's activities and restrict their ability to compete on an even footing with men." (ILO). Women working in the rural sector are also less able to anticipate or recover from disasters or civil unrest, more likely to suffer from food insecurity and poverty and more likely to be marginalized in development projects and economic growth initiatives.

In the MENA, the informal sector, estimated at around 25% of regional GDP, plays an increasingly significant role in providing entry-level work to low-skilled women and young people. However, as Brookings Institute notes, young people entering the informal economy typically encounter low wages, inadequate working conditions and job insecurity. A 2015 EBRD survey of the business environment in the MENA region shows that the informal sector in the MENA is bloated and

shows no signs of slowing down, which puts formally registered businesses at a disadvantage in some sectors. The informal economy is also very difficult to measure and, according to research from the Carnegie Middle East Centre, estimates vary widely between the Arab countries. In Egypt, the informal economy accounts for 40% of economic activity; in Morocco, around 30%; in pre-war Syria, 25% of the labour force was believed to be unregulated and working in the informal sector; and in Jordan, the informal sector represents over 20% of the economy. Across the MENA, the informal sector is absorbing the high numbers of young people unable to secure opportunities in the formal economy.

As the McKinsey Global Institute noted in its influential report in September 2015, *The Power of Parity*, narrowing the gender gap and advancing women's equality across the board could add \$12 trillion to global growth. McKinsey has identified six types of intervention necessary to bridge the gender gap and push through further progress for women, which include promoting financial incentives and support for women; promoting literacy in technology and improving infrastructure; creating economic opportunities for women; capacity building; building on advocacy to reshape cultural attitudes and inspire women's own self-belief; and much-needed reform in laws, policies and regulations that impact the lives of women, children and societies overall.

By continuing to power progress in education levels across the board, we are likely to see more women working in the professions and in technical, or previously male-dominated sectors such as STEM, and assuming leadership roles in all sectors and all spheres. And by ensuring that due attention is paid to the voices of women and youth in the rural and informal sectors, we can drive forward more equitable economic prosperity and social transformation towards true gender equality between men and women in the MENA region.

'When Women Lean In, Economies Win': AIWF proud to announce continued partnership for the German-Arab Women Business Leaders Summit to be held in October 2018 in Munich

AIWF is delighted to announce its continued partnership with the German-Arab Women Business Leaders Summit to be held on 15-17 October 2018 in Munich, Germany. The conference, themed 'When Women Lean In, Economies Win', will explore strategies to empower women economically in recognition of the major potential for women-led economic growth in both Germany and the MENA States. It will provide all participants, leading business women from Germany and the Arab world, with valuable opportunities to exchange ideas, experiences and perspectives to further strategic German-Arab business relations and boost economic ties between the two regions. The conference will be held under the Patronage of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, and is organised by **Dr Gabi Kratochwil**, Founder & Managing Director of CrossCultures Network, in cooperation with Ghorfa Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry and partners.

"The GAWBL-Summit in Munich this October seeks to promote women's empowerment on a range of topics including, leadership, diversity and inclusion, entrepreneurship, knowledge management, STEM, digitalization, financing and capacity building, so as to better deal with future global challenges of modern management, interlinked societies, integrated economies and growing digitalization. We strongly believe that women are key drivers for innovation and growth, and that now is the time to meet, innovate, and create."

Dr Gabi Kratochwil,
Founder & Managing Director of
CrossCultures Network

AIWF's valued links with the German-Arab Women Business Leaders Summit and Dr Kratochwil originate from AIWF's longstanding partnership with Ghorfa,



Haifa Al Kaylani and Dr Gabi Kratochwil at the 16th Arab-German Business Forum in Berlin in June 2014

the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry based in Berlin. In full partnership with Ghorfa, AIWF hosted its first ever conference in Germany in October 2013 in the heart of Berlin and the business community, titled '*From Partnership to Prosperity: Women in the Arab World, Germany & the International Community*', under the valued Patronage of **His Excellency Mr Klaus Wowereit**, Governing Mayor of Berlin. The conference, which followed a series of major global conferences for AIWF building on key themes from one conference to the next and alternating between Arab and international capital cities, was a key initiative for both AIWF and Ghorfa, fostering an environment for successful women business leaders from the Arab world to enhance business growth and create new links for innovation and intercultural collaboration, objectives that lie at the very heart of the AIWF mission. The conference was a major success for all stakeholders as it strengthened existing channels of partnership between the Arab world and Germany, the creation of new avenues for entrepreneurial activity and investment between accomplished women representing Europe and the Middle East.

AIWF's partnership of the October 2018 edition of the German-Arab Women Business Leaders Summit is an excellent opportunity for AIWF to follow up on its commitments to support valuable trade links between Germany and the Arab world. The conference will bring together an exclusive gathering of high-ranking women from the business and academic communities as well as Ghorfa partners and members from diplomacy and government, international civil society and heads of leading business institutions. The GABWL-Summit offers a unique and exciting opportunity to engage with inspiring speakers, to network and share best practice with experts and decision-makers so to devise innovative strategies and to further identify business opportunities.

Keynote Speakers will include **Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani** (Founder & Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum and Fellow, Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative); **HE Dr Shaikha Al Maskari** (CEO Maskari Holding, Forbes List, 2016 Asia-Pacific

Woman Entrepreneur of the Year and AIWF Board Member); **Janina Kugel** (Chief Human Resources Officer and Member of the Managing Board of Siemens AG), and **Petra Justenhoven** (Member of the Managing Board PwC and Manager of the Year 2017).

The conference will be attended by more than 400 participants and representatives from partnering organisations, including the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), UNIDO, GIZ, Diversity Charter, Association of German Women Entrepreneurs (VdU), Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF), Arab League and Union of Arab Chambers. During the GABWL-Summit, the *Ta'awun: German-Arab Women Cooperation of Excellence Award* will be presented. This award honours joint German-Arab women's cooperation projects by recognising women who play a distinct role in establishing partnerships and connections of excellence between Germany and the Arab countries. Under the motto 'Celebrate & Share' the GAWBL-Charity Gala serves to raise funding for a charitable cause chosen by participants.

All AIWF members are offered discounted conference registration at www.gawbl-summit.com (please enter the following registration code: **GAWBL2018Partner**).

AIWF Board Member Sung-Joo Kim hosts Chinese New Year reception in London at MCM flagship store

In February 2018 AIWF had the pleasure of extending to UK-based Board Members, Global Partners and London-based members a special invitation received from valued AIWF Board Member **Sung-Joo Kim**, Chairperson of MCM, on the occasion of the Lunar New Year. MCM hosted its annual Lunar New Year Party on 08 February 2018 at the MCM Flagship Store on Conduit Street in London. Guests received specially selected prizes in a Grand Prize Draw and were entertained by a virtuoso musician whilst networking and enjoying the occasion of the Lunar New Year.

Ms Kim has been a valued Board Member of AIWF since 2012. She is the Founder and Chief Visionary Officer of Sungjoo Group and the Chairperson of MCM Holding AG, selected as a Global Leader of Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum in Davos in 1997 and recipient of the Ethics in Business Award from the EU government in 2009. In 2012, she was listed in *Forbes'* Top 50 Asian Business Women, selected as one of Asia's 25 Hottest CEOs by *Fortune* and invited by the United Nations be part of "Innovation 101" at the Decide Now Act summit. Ms Kim was awarded an Honorary Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in June 2015 for her

contribution to strengthening bilateral ties between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea. She holds three honorary doctorate degrees, from Amherst, London School of Economics and University of the Arts London. From 2014, she served as the President of the Korean Red Cross for three years. Ms Kim is a passionate philanthropist and works with several non-profit organizations, including World Vision, Asia House as a trustee member, the Global Summit of Women as an International Planning Committee member, and numerous other humanitarian initiatives.

She is also the Founder of the Sungjoo Foundation, established in 2009 to improve the status of women through various vocational, educational and charitable programmes designed to inspire them to grow and become Korea's next global leaders. The Foundation is actively and directly involved in several charitable and empowerment projects for women in difficult and desperate situations. It also promotes arts and culture, serves as a global network for Korean and international women and serves to support the empowerment of women everywhere.

AIWF expresses its deepest thanks to Sung-Joo Kim for extending this special invitation to AIWF's London-based network.



Vanessa Kingori, GQ UK, Mrs Kim, and representative of Vogue



Mrs. Kim and Mr. Jérôme de Bontin, Director of Prince Albert II Foundation

AIWF Global Partner NAMA and Global Thinkers Forum to support 100 women to become Business and Community Leaders by 2020

Mentoring Programme to Broaden Prospects for Women's Economic Empowerment

Sharjah's **NAMA Women Advancement Establishment** (NAMA), an AIWF Global Partner, and the London-based international organisation **Global Thinkers Forum** (GTF) have launched the Athena MENA Mentoring Programme 2018 to help women in the region to develop new skills and expertise, and to enhance, enrich and expand their professional and personal prospects. The two organisations confirmed the launch of the programme at a signing ceremony held in London, reflecting NAMA's ever-increasing efforts to empower women locally and globally and equip them with the leadership skills that help them chart their own future path.

The Athena MENA Mentoring Programme 2018 aims to develop the talents, abilities and business acumen of 10-15 women above the age of 22, and provide them with support and networking opportunities and give them a deeper insight into modern business practices. The programme offers guidance, mentorship, and professional advice for mentees by deepening their understanding of international markets and helping them with confidence-building. Adopting scientific and practical strategies and clear action plans for the inclusion of women in local, regional and global economies, the programme encourages women to launch and set up their own enterprises, a forward-thinking scheme that leads to creating a generation of active women leaders.



NAMA and the Global Thinkers Forum launch the Athena MENA Mentoring Programme 2018

The Global Thinkers Forum provides the Athena MENA Programme with an elite group of highly-experienced mentors, many of whom are CEOs and directors of leading international companies and organisations, to present workshops and training sessions to mentees. The programme aims to benefit 100 women from the MENA region by 2020. The selected candidates are provided with a personalised development opportunity to address individual learning needs over a period of eight months.



Elizabeth Filippouli, Founder & CEO Global Thinkers Forum & HE Reem Bin Karam, Director of NAMA Women Advancement Establishment

"In our efforts to empower women we are inspired by the vision and directives of **Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al Qasimi**, wife of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah and Chairperson of NAMA, who believes in women's massive potential and their ability to make unique achievements and substantial contributions to the economy and community," said **HE Reem Bin Karam**, Director of NAMA Women Advancement Establishment. "NAMA looks to the day when women can enjoy a position where they can create their own paths and be on an equal footing with their male counterparts in building their nations. Our partnership with the Global Thinkers Forum in launching the Athena MENA Mentoring Programme exemplifies our desire to see a new generation of women leaders able to take the initiative and inspire others to build a bright future and better tomorrow. It also reaffirms our absolute trust in women and their ability to innovate."

She continued: "The Athena MENA Programme is the fruition of the Women Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS), which was held in Sharjah in December 2017, and highlighted the need to create a motivating environment for women that helps in production, development, growth and innovation on the basis of merit and competence. In this vein, we launched the 'Pledge' initiative that aims to enable women in the working environment."

Elizabeth Filippouli, Founder and CEO of Global Thinkers Forum, to which AIWF Founder & Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** is proud to have been invited to serve as an Advisory Board Member, said: "We are delighted and honoured for the partnership with NAMA to launch this very important Mentoring Programme in MENA. The potential, talent and capacity that is to be found among women in the MENA region is huge. By launching this programme our aspiration is to highlight this dynamism that can add immense value to the MENA economies."

According to the outcome of the 2017 Women Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS), there is a pressing need to provide a suitable environment for women to develop and grow through fair economic empowerment. The summit highlighted the importance of assessing challenges facing women and the inclusion of more women in the private sector, a move that will increase productivity and GDPs. The summit also underlined the need to influence global policy makers to ensure women's integration in the economy, referring to the UAE as a model to be emulated by other countries. The summit offered a platform to motivate action, promote tolerance, integration and equality in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS) hosted in Sharjah by AIWF Global Partner NAMA in collaboration with UN Women

Heba Al Emara, Associate Director, Head of Middle East Relations for Vistra, an AIWF Global Partner, moderated a key panel on 'Financial Innovations and Solutions' during the two-day summit, which aims to create legislature framework, commercial and social awareness that supports females in all roles

The Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS) was hosted by NAMA Women Advancement Establishment in collaboration with the UN Women in Sharjah last December 2017 over a two-day summit. The objective of the Summit is to support female entrepreneurs, business owners and employee opportunities and participation in local, regional and global economic development across sectors.



Heba Al Emara, Associate Director, Head of Middle East Relations for Vistra, moderating a key panel at the Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS) in Sharjah hosted by AIWF Global Partner NAMA in collaboration with UN Women

This first edition and inaugural forum of WEEGS (which will be take place every two years) was held under the patronage of **HH Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi**, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, and his wife, **Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al Qasimi**, Chairperson of NAMA Women Advancement Establishment and Honourary Patron for Global Women's Inclusion, to achieve the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The event was attended by international organisations, governmental bodies, private corporations and an elite group of thought leaders and businesswomen from across the globe to share their expertise and best practices.

As part of the summit, it was an honour to participate and moderate panel 5 of day 1 entitled "Financial Innovations and Solutions". Our Keynote was delivered by **HE Lina Sabatiene** (Former Vice-Minister of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania) and the panellists included **Abdullahi Adan** (VP Gulf African Bank), **Anu Bhardwaj** (CEO of Women Investing In Women Digital), **Virginia Tan** (CEO of She Loves Tech and Lean In China), **Bettina Wittlinger de Lima** (Frankfurt School of Finance & Management) and **Fahmi Quadir** (CEO of Safkhet Capital).

During our session, we discussed stereotypes and perceptions in the financial sector. Our conversation focused on innovative and good practice examples of responsive financial products and services particularly for female entrepreneurs and female-owned small and medium enterprises facing challenges to access debt, equity, venture capital, amongst other needs in order to encourage growth from domestic markets to the global markets.

We acknowledged that some commercial banks, venture capital, impact investment firms and other networks are already engaged to create a sustainable ecosystem through which innovative financing and investment instruments are addressing some challenges, and more importantly new investment approaches underway which will further fund innovations in fields (e.g. technology) in which women are traditionally under represented.

Our panel discussion was one of 20 panel presentations and interactive sessions over the two-day summit, all insightful and informative with the overall aim to create legislature framework, commercial and social awareness that supports females in all roles.

AIWF Global Partner Boodle Hatfield: Lawyers empowering women in London and the Middle East

In September 2017, AIWF Global Partner **Boodle Hatfield** was delighted to host the International Bar Association and AIWF's Women Business Lawyer's seminar. The theme for the day was 'Advancing Gender Equality in Law and the Professions', drawing a full house of lawyers, accountants and students from around the world. The theme of empowering women is something our firm has at its very heart and extends to everything we do both in our professional lives and the support we give to our local community.

Boodle Hatfield is one of the oldest and most respected law firms in London. We advise some of the wealthiest individuals and families in the UK and around the world, large property companies and investors, and entrepreneurial and fast-growing businesses. We were founded in 1722 when we began advising the Duke of Westminster on the development and management of the Grosvenor Estates in London, and we continue to act for his family today.



Salpy Kouyoumjian, Partner, Boodle Hatfield



Shaima Jillood, Partner, Boodle Hatfield

"In February 2018, the firm announced that it has re-elected Sara Maccallum as its Senior Partner for another three-year term. Sara remains one of the few female senior partners amongst the top 100 UK law firms and underlines the firm's commitment to family friendly working. The firm has 33 partners, with women making two-thirds of its senior partners and its Management Committee."

The firm's Middle East practice is led by two native Arabic speaking partners, **Salpy Kouyoumjian** and **Shaima Jillood**, leading a team which is uniquely placed to offer Middle Eastern clients a holistic legal, tax and risk management service to support their sophisticated and complex needs. They are able to explain complex legal matters (Tax, Residential & Commercial Property, Construction, Corporate, Litigation and Family law) in Arabic and have a strong cultural understanding of the region. In June, Shaima will be joining Fortune's Most Powerful Women International Summit, having been nominated by the AIWF to join this exclusive conference.

Boodle Hatfield works closely with our women clients in the Middle East who continue to be attracted to the fantastic opportunities that investing in the London residential property offers, whether a new build apartment in one of London's prime developments or a flat in a more traditional house for refurbishment in central London. In March, Partner Shaima Jillood and the firm's Senior Partner Sara Maccallum will be travelling to Abu Dhabi to speak at JLL's UK tax seminar aimed at Middle Eastern investors and then will continue to Bahrain to speak at an Ahli United Bank's UK tax seminar which is specifically geared to women investors, which will provide an insight into the UK market today and to the important tax implications to consider when buying a London home.

Closer to home we support a number of women-focused events, most recently the Woman Leading Real Estate event organised by US property publishers BisNow, which shared the experiences of how leading women have succeeded in their careers. Boodle Hatfield has for the past five years been named "Best National Firm for Women in Business Law" by Euromoney. The firm has also won numerous awards in the past 12 months including STEP's Private Client Team of the Year (Mid-Size) and Contentious Team of the Year (Mid-Size), and Legal 500 Real Estate (Specialism) Firm of the Year for Residential Property.

#FemDiplomacy: Bringing Arab and Iranian women together to build multinational friendships and business links

AIWF was pleased to be introduced to **Leila Mansouri** by AIWF Board Member **Nadereh Chamlou**, former Senior Advisor to the World Bank, and to find out more about her work on a timely and innovative campaign, #FemDiplomacy, to bring Arab and Iranian women together to build business links and multinational friendships. Leila attended the recent *Young Arab Women Leaders: Women-Led Innovation in STEM* conference organised by AIWF and PwC in London in December 2017. She is an attorney and community leader who often volunteers her time planning events and initiatives to strengthen and unite the Iranian-American community. Leila recently founded #FemDiplomacy and also serves on the boards of two US based non-profit organisations: the Iranian American Bar Association (IABA) and Persian Women in Tech (PWIT).

Q&A with Leila Mansouri, Attorney and Founder of Fem Diplomacy

Q: Tell us about the #FemDiplomacy Campaign and what inspired you to create it?

A: The #FemDiplomacy initiative is a volunteer project aimed at bringing Arab and Iranian women together to build bridges, help one another, and break stereotypes. Not enough is being done to unite Iranians and Arabs, and since women in this region have universally shared values and struggles, they are the best starting point to plant the seeds of change. In recent months, we have seen evidence of both progress and continuing challenges for women in the Middle East region.

In Iran, a woman was named CEO of the national airline, Iran Air, for the first time and record numbers of women were elected to municipal councils in 2017. In Saudi Arabia, the government announced that women would at long last be able to drive in 2018 and stressed that increasing female participation in the labour force would be a major goal in its ambitious economic transformation program. However, in both countries and in many others in the region, women still face barriers in employment, legal status, and freedom of movement. I believe it would be constructive to look at ways to support Arab and Iranian women in their mutual efforts to achieve greater equity in their societies.

This year, #FemDiplomacy will host events that encourage women from the region to build multinational friendships and have these friendships



"In many countries in the region, women still face barriers in employment, legal status, and freedom of movement. I believe it would be constructive to look at ways to support Arab and Iranian women in their mutual efforts to achieve greater equity in their societies."

Leila Mansouri, Founder of #FemDiplomacy

displayed publicly. We believe positive change will occur when this initiative goes viral on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other media outlets. In an age of instantaneous technology and new channels of transmitting messages, we can transform technology into a positive force for women and bridge the cultural, political, economic, and religious gaps worldwide.

Q: How have your international experiences as a woman leader, a lawyer, a community leader and an advocate for women shaped you?

A: My international work and travel experiences have played a key role in creating the #FemDiplomacy initiative, because I have been fortunate to visit over 40 countries and learn different cultures. Travel is crucial to fostering unity and peace, and I wish more people had the opportunity, particularly those in developing countries. Through travel, universally shared values are learned, and those from other countries will learn that they are not alone in their beliefs and struggles. One of the main goals of #FemDiplomacy is to show these universally shared values to people who are not fortunate enough to travel, by bringing them pictures and videos right into their homes. Millions of people have access to smart phones and social media, and this is key to changing perceptions and breaking stereotypes. Anyone can be a leader and bring ideas to life. When I first mentioned the #FemDiplomacy idea to some colleagues, many thought it could not work, which made me want to create it even more, because we must be the change we wish to see in the world!



ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

AIWF IN ACTION: A development organisation leading the way forward for women in the Arab world and internationally

The Arab International Women's Forum, established in 2001 as an independent not for profit organisation, is a unique network linking Arab women with their international counterparts, showcasing their development, ability and competence in business, professional and public life, and creating greater global awareness of women's success and prospects in the Arab world.

Now in its second decade of fulfilling its founding mission of *Building Bridges, Building Business*, AIWF has been a force for change for women in the MENA region, encouraging them 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.

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.

AIWF could not have made the impact it has over the last decade without the support of its Global Partners: PepsiCo, Pfizer, Shell, Nama Women Advancement Establishment, PwC, Vistra, Northern Trust, and Boodle Hatfield, all of whom are committed to strong inclusiveness and diversity policies and developing and training women. Also of great importance to the work of AIWF are its MoU partnerships with the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance, the Mudara Institute of Directors, the Pearl Initiative, the Dubai Business Women Council and Memac Ogilvy.



Founder & Chairman of AIWF Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani addressing the opening session at the 10th Young Arab Women Leaders conference in London

AIWF's keystone initiative, the *Young Arab Women Leaders Conference Series* launched in 2011 by AIWF in partnership with Global Partner PwC, provides a platform for young aspiring Arab women to support, engage and network with mentors in political, economic and social leadership roles in the Arab world. AIWF is also pleased to partner with the International Bar Association Legal Practice Division (IBA/LPD) Initiative for Women Business Lawyers to develop and support women in commercial law in the Arab region and encourage more Arab women to enter into the legal profession.

Supported fully by a global network of partners, the Arab International Women's Forum continues to build on its core mission to achieve sustainable empowerment for women and youth and to champion a concerted drive at the highest levels to advance gender equality in the Arab world.

How to join AIWF

To add your information to the AIWF mailing list to receive news and updates, or to update your existing contact or member information, please email the AIWF Office in London at info@aiwfonline.com

To join AIWF, please visit www.aiwfonline.com

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Date of next issue

The next edition of the AIWF Newsletter will be published in July 2018. AIWF Global Partners, members and contacts are kindly requested to contact the Editor at info@aiwfonline.com on or before 15 June 2018 to contribute articles, photos and news.