



# ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

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## المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

### AIWF Founder & Chairman's Message

As Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF), I am proud to share with you this edition of the AIWF Newsletter for November / December 2019, the final issue in another outstanding year for AIWF which has provided us all with the foundation and momentum to move into 2020 and a new decade for women's empowerment. In this issue, I am pleased to update on AIWF's current outreach, advocacy and initiatives, including the highly successful Joint Conference of AIWF and the American University in Cairo, *Women as Engines of Economic Growth: Empowering women innovators, entrepreneurs, executives and educators towards fulfilment of the SDGs in the MENA Region*, which I was most proud to chair on 17 September 2019 at the AUC New Cairo Campus in Egypt.

The Conference built on the momentum for women's leadership and economic inclusion that AIWF was most proud to have created in Amman, Jordan in September 2018 in partnership with the World Bank Center for Mediterranean Integration when we co-hosted our landmark high-level conference on *Women, Water & Youth* on the intersection between women's economic participation, water-food-energy security and youth empowerment. *Women, Water & Youth* was followed up in Beirut, Lebanon earlier this year in April when AIWF partnered with the American University of Beirut and the University of Massachusetts Medical School for Women Leaders & Health, which brought into focus empowerment challenges and opportunities for women's leadership in research, innovation, medical education and healthcare delivery. I am proud to report that our conference in Beirut achieved significant media coverage, including a prominent article in AUB's widely circulated and highly respected Main Gate magazine, and was exceptionally well-received for the strong recommendations that emerged from the conference discussions and workshop in Beirut and which were duly documented within the Report.

*Women as Engines of Economic Growth* in Cairo reaffirmed AIWF's engagement and advocacy on key challenges and motivators for women's leadership in key sectors and spheres, on corporate boards and in family business, in public service, in sustainability, and



From Left to Right, Mohamed Shelbaya, Dr Ghada Howaidy, Francis J Ricciardone, Haifa Al Kaylani, HE Dr Hala El Said, HE Dr Maya Morsy, at the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* Conference held by AIWF and AUC in Cairo in September 2019

The Arab International Women's Forum was proud to hold a high-level conference on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* in Egypt in September 2019, in partnership with the American University in Cairo as part of AUC's Centenary Year Celebrations, and with the valued support of PepsiCo and PwC.

The conference delivered a rich and full day of conference discussions on empowering women in business, on boards, in public service, in entrepreneurship and social enterprise and in addressing Future of Work challenges for the region. The conference attracted delegates from across the Arab world and internationally, representing Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Mauritius, Malaysia, Austria and Cyprus.

In November 2019, AIWF published a Special Report which delivers 38 impactful, substantive and actionable Recommendations emerging from the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* initiative, which we are proud to share in this edition of the AIWF Newsletter. **Full story on page 5.**

### AIWF 2020 Programme

The Arab International Women's Forum will be proud to announce the 2020 Annual Programme in January 2020.



*Haifa Al Kaylani and the esteemed Members of the AIWF Board and guests at the Special Reception hosted by President Ricciardone for the AIWF / AUC Women as Engines of Economic Growth Conference*

in addressing future of work challenges brought on by technology, automation and AI. As Conference Chair, I was especially proud to welcome to the Opening Session our Guest of Honour Keynote Speakers: **Francis J Ricciardone**, President of AUC, **HE Dr Hala El Said**, Egypt's Minister of Planning, Monitoring & Administrative Reform, **Mr Mohamed Shelbaya**, Chairman & CEO of PepsiCo Egypt, and **HE Dr Maya Morsy**, President of the National Council for Women in Egypt, as well as **HE Mervat Tallawy**, Former Director General, Arab Women Organisation & Former Egyptian Ambassador to Japan and Austria, who chaired a key panel on women in public service which was also addressed by **HE Jan Thesleff**, Ambassador of Sweden to the Arab Republic of Egypt, who shared Sweden's exemplary approach to championing gender sensitive foreign policy.

In Cairo, I was joined by AIWF Co-Chair **Rania Rizk** and AIWF Board Members **Hanan Saab**, **Raghda Kurdi**, **Dr Oualae El Alami**, and **HE Mona Al Moayyed**, Managing Director of YK Almoayyed & Sons and Member of the Shura Council of Bahrain, who was an inspirational keynote speaker on the first panel on women's leadership on corporate boards and in family business. I and all AIWF Board Members attending were especially encouraged by the high level of the recommendations and observations of our distinguished Guest Speakers, all from diverse leadership platforms across government, the private sector, academic institutions, the international development institutions, social entrepreneurship and civil society. As with all AIWF Conferences, we were deeply proud to welcome so many distinguished Arab and international delegates, including those who had travelled from as far afield as Mauritius, Malaysia, Canada and the United States, among many other countries, to participate at this most enlightening and highly interactive AIWF initiative that has once again delivered a strong set of actionable recommendations that could set a new standard for women's empowerment in the MENA Region and globally.

It was indeed a great honour to be at the American University in Cairo on this special occasion held in full partnership with AUC and as part of AUC's milestone Centenary Celebrations. AIWF was most proud to be affiliated with AUC on this path-breaking initiative that brought into focus the vital contributions of women leaders in the economy, in entrepreneurship, and in public office, in Egypt, the broader Arab world and the international community, and it was such a privilege to work closely with AUC's outstanding leadership in the planning and preparations for our conference. I wish to express our sincere appreciation to **Francis Ricciardone**, President of AUC, for generously hosting AIWF for the Special President's Reception on the evening of 16 September, and for the valued partnership of the University on the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* initiative, as well as to **Dr Sherif Kamel**, Dean of the Business School at AUC, and to **Dr Ghada Howaidy**, Associate Dean for Executive Education and External Relations, for their support and that of their valued colleagues in the preparations for our conference and for hosting AIWF on this special occasion.



*Haifa Al Kaylani, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, presents a Commemorative Plate to Francis J Ricciardone, President of the American University in Cairo on the special occasion of the AIWF / AUC Conference in Egypt.*

*Women as Engines of Economic Growth* was made possible with the support of AIWF's valued Global Partners, with special recognition to Global Benefactor Partner PepsiCo as Lead Conference Partner and AIWF Global Partner PwC Middle East as Conference Supporting Partner. On behalf of the Board and as Chairman of AIWF, I extend our warmest appreciation for the partnership and continued endorsement and support of the distinguished leadership at PepsiCo – especially to **Omar Farid**, President of PepsiCo AMENA, to **Mohamed Shelbaya**, Chairman & CEO PepsiCo Egypt, to **Rania Rizk**, SVP & General Counsel, PepsiCo AMENA, and to **Krista Pilot**, Senior Vice President, Public Policy, Government & Corporate Affairs, PepsiCo AMENA – and at PwC, to **Hani Ashkar**, Territory Senior Partner and **Zina Janabi**, Director Middle East Consulting & Middle East Women in Business Leader, PwC Middle East. We acknowledge all their outstanding colleagues in the UAE and in Egypt who lent valuable contributions to the development of the conference programme and

to the implementation of conference logistics on the ground.

I also take this opportunity to pay special acknowledgement to Memac Ogilvy, AIWF's longstanding Global Communications Partner, and to the exemplary Memac Ogilvy team in Cairo who worked so diligently with the AIWF team in London to secure exceptional full coverage in the Egyptian and pan-Arab press and television media in the leadup to and during our conference. AIWF has long recognised the importance of working closely with responsible media to ensure that women are represented accurately and fairly, without bias or stereotype, to emphasise and 'normalise' women's leadership and success stories across a broad spectrum of discourses and in all sectors and spheres. It has long been our belief at AIWF that awareness and knowledge of gender issues and the negative impact of gender inequality in the Arab world hinges on responsible, objective reporting – a point which firmly underscores one of the 38 Recommendations that have been published in our Special Report. I am pleased to share that this edition contains not only a full conference report but also a summary of the key Recommendations that emerged from the high-level speakers, subject experts, change agents and thought leaders who guided and enriched our discussions on the day.

Further strengthening our commitment to engage with media at all levels to raise the profile of gender sensitive issues as they relate to critical economic and social development measures for the MENA Region and internationally, and following the official launch of the IFPRI *Global Food Policy Report: Revitalizing Rural Areas* which I attended at the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut, I am pleased to share that over the summer I was invited by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Egypt to contribute a guest article for the IFPRI blog *Arab Food and Nutrition Security*. The article, on *Promoting sustainable agriculture, women's entrepreneurship and youth empowerment in the MENA Region*, was a key opportunity for AIWF to share insights on these critical topics through the lens of women's empowerment and young engagement.

In the article, we summarised key outcomes that emerged from the AIWF Special Report & Recommendations on *Women, Water & Youth* published in December 2018 with the World Bank Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), which called for improved water governance policies; measuring gender parity in sustainable agriculture; supporting specialised research and data which is lacking in the Arabic language; and linking industry with the agricultural sector to promote research-driven innovation in MENA farming technologies and

techniques (among other recommendations). We look forward at AIWF to working more closely in future with the IFPRI which does such vital work to raise awareness of Arab food security issues and water scarcity which disproportionately impact women and young people in the Arab world.

In October 2019, I returned to the UAE for key meetings including a very special visit to ADNOC LNG's Panorama Digital Command Center at the kind invitation of CEO **Fatema Al Nuaimi**. The Panorama Project is a remarkably futuristic approach to merging big data with energy operations to improve efficiency and ensure sustainability, and a truly remarkable demonstration of the 'future of work' in action. While in Abu Dhabi, I was also delighted to meet with **Dr Meshgan Alawar**, Secretary General of the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment, who enlightened me on the vital work of the Foundation in the UAE on sustainable agriculture in the Emirates, and had the great pleasure of meeting again with **HE Maryam Al Rumaithy**, Executive Board Chairperson of the Abu Dhabi Businesswomen Council (ADBWC) and with **Shafeeqa Al Ameri**, Executive Director of the ADBWC, to discuss areas of mutual interest on empowering women leaders in business in the UAE and the wider region as well as other areas of potential collaboration between AIWF and the ADBWC. HE Mrs Al Rumaithy is also the General Manager of the Family Development Foundation which is doing such important work in the UAE on family, social and community development, and AIWF looks forward to working closely with this valuable organisation in the future towards our shared objective of promoting social cohesion for women, families and young people in the Arab world.

During my UAE visit I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the senior leadership at AIWF's Exclusive Global Benefactor Partner PepsiCo, PwC Middle East, and with NAMA Women Advancement Establishment, to update all our UAE-based partners on the exciting outcomes of the 2019 Annual Programme and plans for 2020 as we build on that momentum and carry forward our mission of *Building Bridges, Building Business* to achieve sustainable empowerment for women and young people in the Arab world and globally. I was also delighted to meet again with **Heba Al Emara** who has been appointed Managing Director for the MENA Region for Vistra, AIWF's valued Global Partner since 2017. Heba is a remarkable young Arab woman leader who has been a dedicated supporter of the AIWF mission for several years. The Board of AIWF and I are especially looking forward to continuing our close collaboration with Heba and with Vistra into the future to support opportunities for the next generation of Arab women leaders in professional advancement and executive leadership.



I am now back at Harvard for most of November as a Fellow of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative (ALI) and a dedicated and active member of the global ALI Community, joining the ALI Coalition in Cambridge, Massachusetts this month for the 10th Anniversary of the Harvard ALI and to be attending a series of special events around the ALI's anniversary milestone. Whilst in Cambridge I also attended the Harvard Women's Leadership Board (WLB) Fall 2019 Meeting, having been a member of the Harvard WLB for 17 years and as a member of the WLB Executive Committee. As part of the 2019 Harvard WLB Fall Meeting agenda and in my capacity as a Commissioner of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, I was invited by Harvard University to introduce a key session on the Future of Work addressed by **Professor Jason Furman**, Professor of the Practice of Economic Policy at Harvard Kennedy School. During the introduction I shared a brief on the ILO Future of Work landmark report, *Work for a brighter future*, published in January 2019 by the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work on which I was privileged to serve as a Commissioner under the leadership of **Stefan Löfven**, Prime Minister of Sweden, and **Cyril Ramaphosa**, President of the Republic of South Africa.

The ILO report to which I was proud to contribute puts people and the work they do at the center of economic and social policy as well as at the center of business practice, with many of the recommendations of the report duly adopted at the ILO Centenary Conference this year in June through the Centenary Declaration, which charts the ILO's course for social justice as we all move forward through the next century. The Harvard session on the Future of Work, the distinguished address of Professor Furman, and the ILO's important work on 'future of work' challenges are covered in depth later in this issue, which will expand on the importance of investing in people's capabilities through lifelong learning, acknowledging that the transitions and the changes we are already being compelled to make – through technological changes and the unprecedented speed of digitalisation and AI adoption – will require most people entering the working world today to have more than one career, which means that the training our young people undertake for their 'first career' will not be sufficient for subsequent careers.

Skills building, reskilling and upskilling, and lifelong education are therefore key to addressing 'future of work' challenges. Indeed, a universal entitlement to lifelong learning which "enables people to acquire skills and to reskill and upskill" is a cornerstone recommendation of the ILO Commission on the Future of Work, and a key priority area for AIWF as we move into 2020 and look forward to working ever more closely with educators, institutions and policymakers to ensure that the solutions to 'future of work' challenges are deeply integrated into transitioning

learning models within the region and beyond. Here, AIWF has identified a special need to facilitate further cross-cultural collaboration and best practice exchange by bringing leading Arab and international institutions and young thought leaders together.

On this particular point, I am proud to share that in line with this commitment, AIWF with the valued support of Injaz in Jordan recently facilitated the application of six young Jordanian leaders for the Schwarzman Scholars programme, which is designed to give students the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and professional networks through a one-year Master's Degree at Tsinghua University in Beijing, one of China's most prestigious universities, and deepen their understanding between China and the rest of the world.

AIWF has a long history of supporting partner universities, organisations and leadership development programmes keen to ensure that the next generation of young Arab leaders are represented in their international academic programme intakes. To this end, AIWF has collaborated with some of the world's leading universities and regional institutes of learning, including the London Middle East Institute at The School of Oriental and African Studies at London University; the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University in Beirut; the University of Massachusetts Medical School; the Harvard Women's Leadership Board at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA; the American University of Beirut, the American University in Sharjah, and the American University in Cairo, among many others.

AIWF's academic partners promote the empowerment of women as an economic imperative and are advocates for entrepreneurship, leadership and sustainability training to become a core part of the business and management syllabus in the MENA region and beyond. We look forward to strengthening key partnerships with academic institutions to power learning opportunities for women and young leaders in the MENA Region and internationally, and we will continue our longstanding practice of allocating a significant number of places for female PhD candidates, early career researchers and undergraduate / postgraduate students to attend AIWF conferences and engage fully in our initiatives in 2020 and beyond.

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless dedication of the Board of the Arab International Women's Forum who this year and every year have lent their exemplary efforts to advancing momentum for our organisation in our key priority areas and in leveraging their own platforms and networks to broaden AIWF's global outreach and impact. The AIWF Board is comprised of outstanding men and women senior leaders in business from the

MENA Region and internationally who voluntarily give of their time and resources to contribute to AIWF's initiatives, ongoing programmes, international advocacy and regional outreach, and their expertise and input are absolutely vital to the continued success of AIWF's Annual Programmes and initiatives.

In this issue, it is my great pleasure to recognise two of our valued Members on their recent, richly deserved appointments and accolades – **Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby**, former Secretary General of AIWF's Institutional Partner the Arab British Chamber of Commerce in London, who was earlier this year appointed as Director General of International Relations at the Ministry of Culture, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and **Dr Alanoud Alsharekh**, Director of Ibtakar Strategic Consultancy which leads the Empowering Kuwaiti Women in Politics training programme and Associate Fellow of the Chatham House MENA Program, who was honoured in the October 2019 BBC 100 Women 2019 List for her inspirational work as Founding Member of the Abolish 153 Campaign. We are all exceptionally proud to have Dr Al Shuaiby and Dr Alsharekh on the Board of AIWF, as their contributions and knowledge have deeply enriched AIWF's direction for many years. We are delighted to feature both women leaders and their accomplishments within this edition of the newsletter.

As we move into our 19th year in 2020, and looking further ahead to our 20th Anniversary in 2021, AIWF and all our Global Partners reiterate our shared commitment to addressing through all our initiatives critical issues of global and regional concern that deeply impact women's lives, their livelihoods, their security and prosperity. Key areas of focus include economic empowerment, financial inclusion, technology and innovation, social entrepreneurship, rural empowerment especially in the agricultural sector which is the lifeblood of the rural economy, lifelong learning, and sustainability across the board. We look forward to working with all partners and stakeholders to collectively mitigate challenges and innovate new solutions through engagement, dialogue and collaboration at all levels.

On behalf of the Board, I look forward to welcoming our friends, members and partners to key conferences and initiatives as part of the 2020 Annual Programme of the Arab International Women's Forum. We thank you for your continued support and confidence in AIWF's mission, and trust that you will enjoy this rich and thoroughly impactful issue of AIWF News.

*Haifa Al Kaylani*

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

## **AIWF's Women as Engines of Economic Growth Conference, held in partnership with the American University in Cairo on 16-17 September 2019, brings global women leaders together in Cairo and sets a new standard for empowering and mainstreaming women's leadership**



*From Right to Left - Haifa Al Kaylani, Francis J Ricciardone, HE Hala El Said, Richard Bartlett, and HE Dr Maya Morsy*

The Arab International Women's Forum is proud to share that its major conference *Women as Engines of Economic Growth: Empowering women innovators, entrepreneurs, executives and educators towards fulfilment of the SDGs in the MENA Region* was held on 16 & 17 September 2019 at and in partnership with the American University in Cairo, with PepsiCo as Lead Conference Partner and PwC Middle East as Conference Supporting Partner.

*Women as Engines of Economic Growth* brought into focus the vital contributions of women leaders to economic growth across the MENA States, and the importance of supporting their development in key positions in public institutions and companies, which is a key national priority in Egypt. Women's leadership is at the core of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, a rights-based approach grounded in the SDGs and Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, endorsed by the President in March 2017. The conference therefore elaborated on critical themes around women's leadership in the economy, entrepreneurship and SME growth, on corporate boards and in family business, executive leadership, innovation and economic development. The programme also recognised women's valuable role to the rural and agricultural sectors and identified successful strategies to strengthen women's engagement in political life

and public service, whilst emphasising the vital role of women in achieving legislative reform and gender balance in policy formation.

Taking forward the momentum that AIWF has created through recent and highly successful STEM-focused initiatives in Beirut (*Women Leaders & Health* in April 2019), Amman (*Women, Water & Youth* in September 2018), and London (*Women-Led Innovation in STEM* in September 2018), the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* initiative represented a unique opportunity for women leaders in diverse sectors to convene at the American University in Cairo, a leading hub for academic excellence, innovation and research in the Arab world, to share perspectives on opportunities and challenges for women's leadership, and examine current and emerging 'future of work' barriers to women's participation in the economy, sustainability, political life and public service, in Egypt, the broader MENA region and internationally.

For this special initiative, AIWF welcomed Distinguished Guest Speakers representing the International Labour Organization, the League of Arab States, The World Bank, The American University in Cairo, the Egyptian Parliament, the National Council for Women in Egypt, PepsiCo Egypt, PwC Middle East, The GCC Boards Institute, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Anna Lindh Foundation, AFI Malaysia, Ashoka Arab World, the Geneva Water Hub at the University of Geneva, and Cairo University, among others. AIWF is deeply appreciative to all our Guest Speakers who generously contributed their time, expertise, invaluable experiences and professional insights to the success of the conference, to the compilation of this Special Report, and in shaping the 38 impactful and substantive Recommendations it delivers.



**HE Amr Moussa, former Secretary General of the League of Arab States, and Richard Bartlett, Chairman of the Board of AUC, at the President's Reception hosted by AUC President Francis Ricciardone on 16 September 2019**

The *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* programme commenced with a special President's Reception hosted on the evening of 16 September at Watson House, the private residence of the President

of AUC, followed by the Conference Opening Session and four highly interactive and exceptionally well-attended Conference sessions held on 17 September 2019. As Conference Chair, **Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani**, Founder & Chairman of AIWF, delivered the Conference Opening Keynote Address and welcomed Opening Session Guest of Honour Keynote Speakers: **Francis J Ricciardone**, President of AUC, **HE Dr Hala El Said**, Egypt's Minister of Planning, Monitoring & Administrative Reform, **Mohamed Shalbaya**, Chairman & CEO of PepsiCo Egypt, and **HE Dr Maya Morsy**, President of the National Council for Women in Egypt.



**AIWF Chairman Haifa Al Kaylani, delivering her Keynote Address in the Opening Session**

In her Keynote Address, Mrs Al Kaylani said: "*Women as Engines of Economic Growth* comes at a pivotal time for women leaders in the MENA States and in Egypt, when we are witnessing greater involvement of women in the economy and in public office. We are all exceptionally proud of women's achievements in these and all spheres, and we see their successes as key to addressing the empowerment challenges that remain. This is why AIWF took the lead on this initiative: to bring into focus the unprecedented opportunities for women to lead as drivers of economic change and growth in the Arab world and elaborate on how to develop those opportunities by working together to specifically address and overcome the challenges that remain."

Mrs Al Kaylani continued, "AIWF is proud to have had this opportunity to partner with the American University in Cairo as part of AUC's Centennial Celebrations in 2019 on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth*, a key opportunity to recognise women's path-breaking achievements in the private sector, public office, entrepreneurship, academia and sustainability, and to move momentum forward on women's economic empowerment in the wider Arab world. In all our discussions, we aimed to collaboratively construct a robust strategy and framework of recommendations to support women in reaching their full leadership potential, in all sectors



and spheres. In doing this, we have all opened doors even wider for women's economic participation across the region."



*Francis J Ricciardone, President of the American University in Cairo*

Francis J Ricciardone, President of the American University in Cairo, shared in his Keynote Address that it was an honour to be hosting the AIWF conference at AUC: "I can think of no prouder way at AUC to be advancing through our Centenary Year than by marking it in our century of service to this country and the region with special emphasis on this topic of the conference, promoting men and women in equal measure as engines of national service, growth and development." AUC, he said, is preparing students for an unpredictable future of work and social development and is committed to helping people "learn how to learn", a statement which deeply resonated with many of the conference participants and several of the speakers who referenced these words in their later interventions throughout the day. President Ricciardone also restated the importance of connectivity, given AUC's ethos as a global university and AIWF's prominence in the international community as a truly international forum for women leaders.



*HE Dr Hala El Said, Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, Egypt*

HE Dr Hala El Said, Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, shared that women's organisational capacity and women's access to paid work can transform the economic pathway, empower collective empowerment, active citizenship, entrepreneurship policy, access to finance and a variety of other non-financial services. Her Excellency said: "Empowerment helps to create a globally competitive private sector capable of success in an increasingly globalized economy and improve companies' access to much stronger talent pools. We should build on this and not be ashamed to recognise where more work is needed. Our goals and aspirations must go beyond numbers and check boxes. We should accept no less than transforming institutional culture so we can access and capitalize on our full potential, creating an environment that embraces equality and is inclusive towards all our citizens. Our daughters," said Dr El Said, "must grow up in a region where opportunity, access to resources and services is equal in every sense. This is a moral imperative and also the greatest potential economic stimulus in our economic future."



*Mohamed Shelbaya, Chairman & CEO, PepsiCo Egypt*

Mohamed Shelbaya, Chairman & CEO of PepsiCo Egypt, conveyed how honoured he was to be part of the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* programme at AUC with PepsiCo Egypt as Lead Conference Partner. He shared how proud PepsiCo are to be the Global Benefactor Partner of the Arab International Women's Forum, calling the conference a "great forum to express thoughts and ideas on how to elevate women in Egypt. We are very proud of our partnership with AIWF that has continued for nearly ten years now. What has made the partnership so successful is that our goals are similar, and we share a common determination to break stereotypical views about women and bring greater public awareness of their capabilities and their potential in society and the workplace."



*HE Dr Maya Morsy, President of the National Council for Women, Egypt*

HE Dr Maya Morsy, President of the National Council for Women in Egypt, focused her Keynote Address on strategies to mainstream all aspects of women's empowerment. She said: "Women are the powerhouse because they are changing the mindset and the whole setup. Women have set the stage with key messages on the SDGs." To women directly, Dr Morsy said: "A strong woman is one determined to do something others are not to do, to break the glass ceiling shatter and the walls that constrain you. Power will never be given to you. You must use your power and presence to claim it."

Guest Speakers were all prominent and accomplished thought leaders, women's advocates and change agents, entrepreneurs, social enterprise founders, senior professional women and policymakers representing non-profit organisations, international development agencies, academic institutions and private sector corporations.

These included the International Labour Organization, the League of Arab States, The World Bank, The American University in Cairo, the Egyptian Parliament, the National Council for Women in Egypt, PepsiCo Egypt, PwC Middle East, The GCC Boards Institute, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Anna Lindh Foundation, AFI Malaysia, Ashoka Arab World, the Geneva Water Hub at the University of Geneva, and Cairo University, among others. AIWF was deeply impressed by the exceedingly high calibre of all our Panel Chairs, Distinguished Guest Speakers, and Conference Participants, all outstanding business, diplomatic and academic leaders who are most inspirational and accomplished in their fields, and who contributed at such a high level to the conference success.

The first panel of the day, *Advancing women's leadership and gender diversity on corporate boards and in family business: Best practices from Egypt, the broader MENA region and internationally*, was chaired by **Dr Ghada Howaidy**, Associate Dean Executive Education and External Relations, School of Business, American University in Cairo, Egypt, and

welcomed as Distinguished Guest Speakers **Mona Al Moayyed**, Managing Director, YK Almoayyed & Sons, Bahrain; **Lilia Hachem Naas**, Director of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Office for North Africa, Morocco; **Elisabeth Guigou**, President, Anna Lindh Foundation, Egypt; and **Jane Valls**, Executive Director, The GCC Board Directors Institute, UAE.



*HE Mona Al Moayyed, Managing Director, YK Al Moayyed & Sons and Member of the Shura Council, Bahrain, speaking on the first panel on women on corporate boards and family business*

Strategies to increase women's representation on boards have gained considerable momentum in the last few years, which include "implementing quotas, setting voluntary targets, disclosing and increasing transparency in director appointments, and addressing unconscious bias". There is less emphasis on regulation and quotas in corporate governance reform in the region, and more on developing Arab women to take on future board leadership roles, with some countries in recent years legislating to improve women's participation on corporate boards and in executive leadership. There are also numerous NGOs and organisations in the region that are working closely with the private sector to strengthen corporate governance and promote the role of female leadership on corporate boards. The first session was accordingly dedicated to examining strategies for building awareness, educating, promoting opportunities and enhancing positive change in the community towards greater acceptance of women in business and corporate reform that brings more women leaders into the boardroom.



*The first panel of the day, Advancing women's leadership and gender diversity on corporate boards and in family business: Best practices from Egypt, the broader MENA region and internationally*





**Panel 2 on gender diversity in entrepreneurship, with focus on social entrepreneurship and innovation in the rural industries and agricultural sector**

Panel 2, *Women in entrepreneurship and SME development, the rural / agricultural sectors and the informal economy*, was chaired by **Nada El Agizy**, Sustainable Development and International Cooperation Director, League of Arab States, Egypt, and was focused on strategies for empowering women in entrepreneurship, specifically in the rural industries, and for 'formalising the informal' economy.

For many women in the Arab world, entrepreneurship has been a lifeline to economic inclusion. Some parts of the region are witnessing the exciting growth of networking organisations, online web communities, publications, entrepreneurship training and mentorship initiatives, as well as funding competitions specifically targeted at women entrepreneurs with a special focus on those in tech innovation and social enterprise. In other parts of the region, women in the rural and agricultural sectors face significant gender disparity, in entrepreneurship and in economic inclusion overall.

On these key issues, the session welcomed the valued insights of **Fatma El Zahraa Aglan**, Agricultural Specialist, Agriculture and Food Global Practice, The World Bank, Egypt; **Dr Iman Bibars**, Vice President, Ashoka Global & Regional Director, Ashoka Arab World, Egypt; and **Dr Salwa Bayomi El Magoli**, Professor, Department of Food Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University, Egypt.



**Panel 3 on women in public service, chaired by HE Mervat Tallawy, former Ambassador of Egypt to Austria and Japan and former Director General of the Arab Women Organization**

The third session of the day, *Women in public service and leadership: Towards gender parity in parliament and women's inclusion in policy making*, was chaired by **HE Mervat Tallawy**, Former Director General, Arab Women Organisation & Former Egyptian Ambassador to Japan and Austria, who invited the Arab and international leaders on the panel to examine strategies for supporting women's advancement in public life. The session was addressed by **HE Jan Thesleff**, Ambassador of Sweden to the Arab Republic of Egypt, who delivered a riveting Keynote on Sweden's gender sensitive foreign policy which represents excellent best practice for the MENA Region. Guest Speakers on this inspiring session included **Dr Heba Hagrass**, Member of Egyptian Parliament, Egypt; **Natasha Carmi**, Lead Water Specialist, Geneva Water Hub, University of Geneva, Switzerland; **Almas Jiwani**, President Emeritus UN Women Canada NC & CEO Almas Jiwani Foundation, Canada; **Frida Khan**, Senior Specialist, Non-Discrimination and Gender Equality International Labour Organization Regional Office for the Arab States, Lebanon; and **Helen Walbey**, Head of Gender Inclusive Finance, AFI Malaysia.



**Distinguished delegates of the Women as Engines of Economic Growth Conference**

The final panel of the day, *Reflections on the future of work for women and young people in the MENA Region*, examined development challenges that the Arab private and public sectors will urgently need to address in order to adequately prepare the Arab workforce for a 'future of work' that will be irrevocably changed by technology, automation and AI. The panel was chaired by **Haifa Al Kaylani**, who was the only Commissioner from the Arab world to be invited to contribute to the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, and was addressed by **Deborah Greenfield**, Deputy Director General for Policy, International Labour Organization (ILO), Switzerland; **Dr Afef Haddad**, Deputy to the Country Director, Country Program Coordinator Maghreb and Malta, The World Bank, USA; **David Suarez**, People and Organisation Middle East Leader, PwC Middle East, UAE; **Dr Haleema Al Sabbah**, Associate Professor & Chair of the College of Natural and Health Sciences, Zayed University, UAE; and **Dr Nagla Rizk**, Professor, Department of Economics & Founding Director, Access to Knowledge for Development Center, American University in Cairo, Egypt.



*The final panel on Future of Work challenges for women and young people in the MENA Region, chaired by Haifa Al Kaylani, who was a Commissioner on the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work*

The themes of the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* Conference are at the heart of what AIWF has been leading with at the Arab and international level for nearly 19 years with the invaluable support of all our Global Partners. AIWF now looks forward to working closely with all our Conference Partners and Stakeholders to set a new standard for women's empowerment in the MENA region and beyond, and action the many valuable recommendations that emerged from the day's conference discussions which are documented in the AIWF Special Report on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* which AIWF was proud to publish in November 2019.

## AIWF Chairman meets with Fatema Al Nuaimi, CEO ADNOC LNG, in Abu Dhabi

In October 2019, AIWF Founder & Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** had the pleasure of visiting **Fatema Al Nuaimi**, CEO of ADNOC LNG, at ADNOC LNG's HQ in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The visit was in follow up to the February 2019 visit of Mrs Al Kaylani and AIWF Co-Chair **Sana Bardawil** to Mrs Al Nuaimi, who was then Acting CEO of ADNOC LNG.

This follow up meeting offered Mrs Al Kaylani the opportunity to convey the warmest congratulations of the AIWF Board to Mrs Al Nuaimi on her path-breaking appointment as CEO of the eminent gas processing and LNG production company based in Abu Dhabi and operating at Das Island, an oil and gas industrial operations facilities hub located 160km off the coast of the UAE. The meeting also provided an excellent opportunity for Mrs Al Kaylani and Mrs Al Nuaimi to identify areas of mutual interest with regard to empowering women leaders in the energy sector and possible collaboration to enhance and support the vital role that women play in the oil and gas industry, with the UAE truly leading the way in senior female



*AIWF Chairman Haifa Al Kaylani had the pleasure of meeting with Fatema Al Nuaimi, ADNOC LNG CEO, during her visit to the UAE in October 2019*

appointments and capacity building of its female and male oil and gas workforce.

During the visit, Mrs Al Kaylani was invited to tour ADNOC's Panorama Digital Command Centre, which ADNOC has pioneered to maximise value from its reserves and operations and drive its digital transformation as a future-ready oil company and as a principle catalyst for the continued economic growth and diversification of the UAE. The Panorama Digital Command Centre is a fully integrated, real-time data visualisation centre that empowers ADNOC's sharpest minds to gain insights, unlock efficiencies, and identify new pathways to optimise performance. After the tour of the Panorama Centre, Mrs Al Nuaimi hosted a luncheon in Mrs Al Kaylani's honour with members of ADNOC's Gender Balance Committee.

Mrs Al Kaylani said during the visit: "What ADNOC is doing in the region to empower women and young people as the STEM workforce of the future is truly inspirational and a model to be benchmarked by major corporations not only in the Emirates but in all energy-producing economies that realise the urgent need to leverage the education, leadership, skills and capacity of women in the energy sector. In addition, what ADNOC is doing through its highly impressive Panorama Digital Command Centre to harness the power of big data and essentially merging artificial intelligence with energy operations to maximise return across operational value chains is nothing short of remarkable. It was a privilege to visit the Centre and to hear first-hand about ADNOC's important initiatives to prioritise Emirati women's empowerment in energy and the STEM sectors."

Mrs Fatema Al Nuaimi, CEO of ADNOC LNG, said: "Gender diversity in the workplace is a top strategic priority not only in ADNOC, but also for the UAE. The evidence is clear that gender balance contributes to better corporate performance. I am very proud of the achievements we have made in ADNOC to both increase women in leadership and women in technical



positions on site. Women in ADNOC are today and in the future increasingly key partners in the long-term growth and prosperity of the company. We look forward to working closely with AIWF to explore further collaboration opportunities to support this important agenda."

The Arab International Women's Forum looks forward to maintaining close contact with the leadership of ADNOC LNG moving into 2020, to further explore opportunities for future collaboration, innovative programmes and new initiatives to empower and support women in the energy sector in the Emirates and the broader MENA region.

## AIWF Global Benefactor Partner PepsiCo and CARE launch *She Feeds the World* with investment of US\$3.7 million in Egypt

**Complementing Egypt's 2030 vision on women empowerment and achieving gender equality, AIWF is proud to share that the PepsiCo Foundation and CARE have launched a three-year *She Feeds the World* program with an investment of US \$3.7 million in Egypt. *She Feeds the World* aims to provide resources and good practices training to female farmers and their families to help them increase crop yields and income in Beheira, Giza, Minya, and Beni Suef governorates. The program is expected to benefit 390,000 female small-scale producers and their families.**

In October 2019, PepsiCo Egypt, AIWF's valued Conference Partner for the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* conference held in Cairo in September 2019, and CARE Egypt launched the *She Feeds the World* program in Egypt in the presence of the Minister of Social Solidarity. The 3-year program is funded with a US\$3.7 million grant from the PepsiCo Foundation, the philanthropic arm of PepsiCo, one of the world's leading food and beverage companies and the owner of Chippy Egypt. The program seeks to tackle food and nutrition security and gender inequality in the agriculture sector.

*She Feeds the World* recognizes that female farmers possess enormous potential to substantially improve their families' nutrition and reduce hunger. The program will apply an integrated approach to addressing the primary barriers that female farmers face: access to tools, inputs, financial services, agricultural training, and markets to sell their produce. With nearly 75 years of experience, CARE is a leader in fighting global poverty by implementing evidence-based approaches that unlock the potential of small-scale female farmers.



Mohamed Shelbaya, Chairman & CEO, PepsiCo Egypt

Research shows that if female farmers had the same access to resources as their male counterparts, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent, potentially reducing the number of hungry people in the world by up to 150 million. The *She Feeds the World* program seeks to improve nutritional wellbeing of 10,000 small-scale producer households with women of reproductive age and children under the age of two in Beheira, Giza, Minya, and Beni Suef by promoting improved nutritional behavior, water replenishment, private and public sector engagement and improving access to productive resources. The program also places emphasis on sustainable practices related to water use in agriculture. CARE aims to integrate women's empowerment activities to engage both women and men in addressing barriers of entry for women to agricultural supply chains.

The partnership protocol was signed in the presence of **HE Dr Ghada Wali**, Minister of Social Solidarity in Egypt, by **Mohamed Shelbaya**, CEO of PepsiCo Egypt and **Dr Hazem Fahmy**, CARE Egypt Country Director and Acting CEO of CARE Egypt Foundation. The protocol signing took place at the official launch event of *She Feeds the World* program in Egypt. PepsiCo is investing US \$18.2 million in this initiative across six countries – Egypt, Peru, Uganda, Guatemala, Nigeria and India. This global partnership has the potential to create change at scale, increasing food security and enhancing the livelihoods of 5 million female farmers and their families globally.

"PepsiCo is proud to partner with CARE to launch *She Feeds the World* in Egypt. This important program is in line with our support for Egypt's 2030 vision and the UN Sustainable Development Goals to achieve gender equality, especially in the agriculture sector – one of Egypt's key national GDP contributors," said Mohamed Shelbaya, CEO of PepsiCo Egypt.

"Women represent half of the society, and it is our role to join hands with the public sector and NGOs to

be able to make a positive impact on their lives and transform their biggest challenges into opportunities. She Feeds the World program will enable higher crop yields and grower incomes, improved community and household nutrition, reduced environmental impacts and enhanced gender equity across four governorates," Shelbaya added.

"When female farmers boost their production and generate more income, they send their children to school, feed their families nutritious meals, keep their kids healthy over the course of their lives, expand their businesses and employ others, and build savings to help them weather tough times. This is why CARE has launched She Feeds the World, an initiative to empower women farmers in developing countries to better support themselves, their families and their communities," said **Dr Hazem Fahmy**, CARE Egypt Country Director and Acting CEO of CARE Egypt Foundation.

Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Social Solidarity, PepsiCo Egypt and CARE, to promote the health and well-being of women and young people. "This protocol is a true example of a partnership between the Ministry of Social Solidarity representing the public sector, CARE Egypt represents the civil society organization and the private sector represented by PepsiCo Egypt. We firmly believe that cooperation and integration is the best formula to achieving great success of this program," said HE Dr Ghada Wali, Minister of Social Solidarity.

Chipsy Egypt, a foods subsidiary of PepsiCo Egypt is a pioneer in its agriculture program, which is the second largest program in PepsiCo globally. Chipsy sources 100% of its potatoes locally, cultivating 40,000 acres through 4,000 farmers. The company is able to produce 70% of PepsiCo's requirements for seeds locally, reducing the cost of imports and further supporting the local economy. This partnership is part of a broader effort by PepsiCo to support a more sustainable food system by empowering women in its own agricultural supply chain, including through its Sustainable Farming Program currently active in 38 countries, and by investing in agricultural programs that have the potential to achieve systems change at scale.

Established in 1962, The PepsiCo Foundation works with nonprofit partners and invests in the essential elements of a sustainable food system – helping alleviate hunger, manage water and waste responsibly, and support women as champions of nutrition from farm to family. AIWF is proud to support the PepsiCo Foundation and CARE in this valuable and much-needed initiative and looks forward to updating our members, friends and supporters of the program's progress in future editions of the AIWF Newsletter.

## Driving collaborative action to address critical development challenges: In recognition of AIWF's valued Global Partners

**The Arab International Women's Forum creates impact by bringing together the private sector, governments, international development organisations, academia, civil society and importantly, women and youth themselves, to drive collaborative action between MENA and global partners at all levels on projects and initiatives that can change the lives of women and young people in the Arab world and internationally.**

AIWF Benefactor Partner PepsiCo and Global Partners Pfizer, Shell, NAMA, PwC, Vistra, Northern Trust and Boodle Hatfield are all committed to strong inclusion and diversity policies and the development of the region's rising stars across a number of sectors and spheres. AIWF and all Global Partners are fully committed to supporting the empowerment of women and youth in public service, the private sector, on corporate boards and in family business, in social enterprise and entrepreneurship, and the rural economy.

AIWF and all Partners are also committed to highlighting innovative solutions and best practice addressing key development challenges for the region, among them: water scarcity and food insecurity; the impact of armed conflict and record internal displacement on women; women's health, economic participation and political representation; the need for workplace policy change and education reform to mitigate 'future of work' challenges in the Arab world; cultural, social and legal barriers to entrepreneurship across the region; and the ongoing challenge of MENA youth unemployment. It is only with the generous support of PepsiCo and all AIWF Global Partners that AIWF is able to make a difference on women's leadership development, youth empowerment, and the participation of women and young people in economic life, public service and sustainable development in the Arab world.

As the 2019 Annual Programme comes to a close and looking ahead to an exciting Annual Programme for 2020, AIWF reiterates its deepest appreciation for the continued confidence and partnership of PepsiCo and all valued Global Partners, which has enabled AIWF to lead with excellent initiatives and conferences making the 2019 AIWF Annual Programme and all AIWF's international outreach and advocacy at the highest levels possible, and has contributed to our shared mission to empower and support women's leadership in the Arab world.



**AIWF ACKNOWLEDGES WITH MUCH APPRECIATION  
THE VALUED SUPPORT OF AIWF GLOBAL & INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS**

**AIWF Global Corporate Benefactor Partner**



**AIWF Global Platinum Partners**



**AIWF Global Diamond Partners**



**AIWF Institutional Partners**



**AIWF Global Communications Partner**



## AIWF publishes Special Report & Recommendations emerging from high-level conference on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* in Cairo in September 2019

On 11 November 2019, following the highly successful conference in Cairo in September 2019 on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth*, AIWF launched a Special Report which documents the key points of the high-level panel deliberations and outlines the substantive, impact-oriented and actionable recommendations that emerged from this milestone AIWF conference held at and in partnership with the American University in Cairo on 17 September 2019 as part of AUC's Centenary Celebrations.

*Women as Engines of Economic Growth* was a major milestone in AIWF's 19-year history of advocacy and action for women and young people in the MENA Region and internationally, strengthening AIWF's growing international advocacy network of key partners and institutions equally committed to empowering and supporting women's leadership in all sectors and spheres.

After consultation with all valued Guest Speakers and key stakeholders, AIWF announced the publication of the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* Special Report and the 38 high-level Recommendations which are focused around skills building, reskilling and upskilling as part of education reform in STEM to prepare the workforce of the future; legislative reform to ensure gender-neutral legislation and implementation on the ground; promoting quotas and eliminating nepotism to increase female representation on corporate boards; reforming inheritance law and property rights to empower women's entrepreneurship in agriculture; supporting women in entrepreneurship and introducing social enterprise laws across the region.

The Recommendations also call for workplace policy change with regard to updating labour codes around workplace regulations, maternity and parental leave, childcare and elderly care policies; addressing the lack of research and data in the region available openly and in the Arabic language as this is vital to strategic policy design; re-educating the media on representing women and leadership in many forms - in business, in communities and within families; crowdsourcing tech solutions to agricultural issues and aligning technical agriculture education with agribusiness and industry especially the food industries; improving access to financial literacy training; and investing in the care economy, the rural economy and in digital infrastructure.



*Women as Engines of Economic Growth* conference deliberations produced a Special Report & Recommendations launched by AIWF in November 2019, now available for download from the AIWF website

The full Report and Recommendations are available in English for download from the AIWF website ([www.aiwfonline.com](http://www.aiwfonline.com)), and upon publication were widely shared by AIWF with a diverse range of valued global partners and key contacts across the governmental, academic, private sector and international development spheres, including the World Bank, the League of Arab States, UN organisations and agencies, the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Union for the Mediterranean, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Report has also been shared with the 'Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), USAID, UN Women, the MENA-OECD Investment Programme, the Arab Women Council, Education for Employment (EFE), the World Food Programme, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Zayed University, Harvard Kennedy School, the American University of Beirut, the Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Italian Arab Chamber of Commerce, and Ghorfa Arab German Chamber of Commerce & Industry, among many others.

AIWF now looks with great optimism to carrying the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* initiative forward into the future and to working closely with all partners and participants to promote and action the many valuable recommendations to emerge from the conference.

The AIWF Board, AIWF Global and Institutional Partners, and international members remain available to all valued stakeholders for fruitful co-operation on future initiatives towards realising the recommendations of our conference in the region and towards achieving economic security, prosperity and progress for all.



## Highlights | Key Recommendations from Women as Engines of Economic Growth Special Report & Recommendations

- **Legislative reform** should be prioritised to ensure gender-neutral legislation and implementation on the ground. Laws around new investment must mention equal opportunity and women's financial inclusion. This applies equally to laws around bankruptcy, inheritance, and property. Legislative reform should particularly address violence against women with laws in place to prevent and address harassment and violence in the workplace.
- **Workplace policy change** should be at the forefront of legislative reform, with regard to updating labour codes around workplace regulations, maternity and parental leave, childcare and elderly care policies. Recruiters should be prohibited in law from asking women if they are engaged or married, or the ages of their children. The region must move away from 'maternity' leave and towards a progressive model for 'parental' leave which would help change workplace culture and incentivise shared responsibility of childcare.
- **There is an urgent need to publish more data** in the region so that policy formation, economic reform and social development is tied in with hard facts and objective, ethically produced data. Data should be made available on an open basis to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and innovation in the region. Data should be made available in the Arabic language. In the Arab region, not enough countries are collecting viable, ethical data, aggregated properly or collected using various methodologies or updated technologies. Statistics, data collection and analysis are vital to strategic policy design and critical to making institutional and organizational changes in the region that will promote gender balance and address legislative gaps or advocacy priorities.
- **Reframing entrepreneurship:** The more we work to empower women to be part of the social entrepreneurship network the more they will deliver real structural solutions to social problems. In its strategy and policy development, in both the public and private sectors, the region needs to move beyond using the term 'entrepreneurship' in the strictly profit-making sense and reframe regional awareness of how entrepreneurship, and more specifically social entrepreneurship, can inspire local solutions to local problems.
- **Introduce social enterprise laws** across the region to empower innovators to set up social enterprises with tax exemptions as they do in Europe and the United States, as this way the region can attract impact investors to invest in the region and especially in agriculture.
- **Create a regional strategy to address unpaid work and the care economy** to ensure that the family and social and fiscal policies do not discriminate against women. Parliamentarians must prioritise national investment into the care economy because of its enabling effect (it enables women to redistribute their care responsibilities and enter the labour market, for example) and because the care economy itself also generates jobs and contributes to GDP. The region's parliamentarians must work to change perceptions of men as well as women, institutions and society, around care work and formally recognising it in the formation of policy as a shared responsibility between women, men and the state, not just the priority of mothers.
- **Prioritise skills building, reskilling and upskilling, as well as multi-stakeholder investment in lifelong education**, as key to addressing Future of Work challenges for the MENA economies. A universal entitlement to lifelong learning "enables people to acquire skills and to reskill and upskill" and is a cornerstone recommendation of the ILO Commission on the Future of Work.
- **Investing in the care economy** would liberate women to join the labour market and potentially create over 50 million 'decent jobs' globally. Addressing the impact of unpaid care work on women and recognizing the imbalance in demands between work and family is key to resolving women's most persistent challenge to economic participation. It is important to note that this is a region with the highest share of unpaid care work among all regions and all income groups.
- **Investing in digital infrastructure** is key to addressing Future of Work challenges to ensure that the digital divide between advanced economies, developing and emerging economies does not continue to widen, as workers are already lacking the infrastructure and skills needed to compete in a digital-first working landscape of the present as well as the future.
- **Explore the feasibility of rolling out the World Bank's EmpowerHer initiative across the region** as this project uses technology to build bridges between youth as agents of change and women as agents of societal transformation. Also explore whether the project could be broadened to sectors outside of agriculture or the rural

industries, bringing young unemployed tech specialists together with entrepreneurs from a broad range of sectors with more hackathons and by allocating more funding.

- **Examine the feasibility of a regional roll out of Gender Balance Councils** Established in 2015, the UAE Gender Balance Council is a federal entity responsible for developing and implementing the gender balance agenda in the United Arab Emirates. This initiative should be examined independently and in consultation with the UAE Gender Balance Council to determine feasibility of rolling out similar Councils around the region.
- **Develop new gender sensitive strategies for managing the agriculture associations, which are the main players in rural areas** 45% of the labour force in agriculture is rural women so we need strategies to recognise the potential of women. These associations are the missing link between women's empowerment and the agricultural sectors / food industries and can offer women entrepreneurs vital lifelines of support in terms of access to markets, finance and training.
- **Technical agriculture education must align with agribusiness and industry especially the food industries** Academia and universities must encompass capacity building as the cornerstone of degree programmes in food sustainability, agriculture and food sciences. More attention needs to be paid by universities with regard to how to link theoretical agriculture education in the classroom with technical experience and learning in the field, as well as to link graduates in the agriculture, food sciences and sustainability disciplines with the food industries to ensure that the best and brightest talent have a stepping stone into the industry and into the relevant public sector departments where their education and skills can contribute to future solutions.
- **Government leaders in the region must ensure diversity in government portfolios led by women** Appointing women ministers to lead diverse portfolios, especially those traditionally entrusted to male ministers, will inspire diversity in senior leadership across the board. Diversity in government portfolios led by women will trickle down to diversity in the leadership opportunities that come up for women.
- **Examine the feasibility of rolling out the Zayed University Qudwa ('Teaching for Global Excellence') Initiative regionally** Qudwa is a forum for teachers, by teachers that aims to elevate the teaching profession in the UAE and improve the future of education. This initiative should be examined independently and in consultation with Zayed University to determine feasibility of rolling out chapters around the region.
- **Combat violence against women in popular culture and entertainment output** The region has vibrant Arabic language entertainment and creative industries, and the role of popular culture cannot be underestimated in terms of championing progress in social and institutional culture and promoting a shift in the mindsets of men and children – at home, in school, in the media, and in films. Artists, musicians, filmmakers, producers, writers and other creatives in the region's entertainment value chain must shift cultural output in the region away from 'normalising' violence against women, in films, television series, or other popular culture and entertainment platforms, and towards engaging with other stakeholders in the arts, the film industry, and the entertainment industry to take violence against women off our screens and change dominant narratives.
- **Examine the feasibility of expanding the Women on Boards Observatory regionally** The Women on Boards Observatory, established in 2017 at the AUC School of Business, issues an annual monitoring report on the representation of women as Members of Boards of Directors in Egypt and maintains a database of qualified women who can serve on Boards. This initiative should be examined in consultation with AUC and a consortium of MENA and international universities to determine feasibility of rolling out the initiative to Business Schools around the region feeding data into a main centralized regional observatory body at AUC.
- **Create a benchmark for Family Councils in Family businesses** Encourage the formation of Family Councils within family-owned conglomerates in the region where all family members are represented in the council and meet twice a year with the company's Board of Directors, as well as a lawyer and independent auditor bringing objectivity to the Board. Family businesses in the region should also create a charter or constitution for the business, with the main factors in the constitution being succession planning and the declaring of conflicts of interest. These solutions represent excellent practice that should be considered further for emulation by family businesses around the region.

**Please visit the AIWF website to download the full Special Report & Recommendations for Women as Engines of Economic Growth.**



## AIWF Global Partner NAMA to partner with UN Women for second Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit

**AIWF Global Partner NAMA Women Advancement Establishment (NAMA) was founded in 2015 to create enabling environments to advance gender equity and inclusive economic and social growth. Through its three affiliates, the Sharjah Business Women Council, Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council, and Badiri Education and Development Academy, NAMA designs and implements initiatives that support women across the economic, professional and social sectors. NAMA also engages with grass-roots and international organisations as part of its comprehensive approach towards developing an ecosystem in which women's full potential is realised.**

The NAMA Women Advancement Establishment (NAMA)'s mission to provide an enabling environment for women to access knowledge, support systems and resources through a robust development network makes NAMA a natural fit as AIWF Global Partner, which with its longstanding mission of *Building Bridges, Building Business* has been an agent of change for women in the Arab region for nearly twenty years. NAMA's firm commitment to supporting efforts for women's empowerment globally have found expression through the Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS) first held in 2017. This year, the second edition of WEEGS will be held under the theme *Drivers of Change* on December 10 - 11, 2019 in Sharjah, UAE, taking forward the important conversations it initiated at the inaugural event on women advancement and empowerment in both economic and professional domains.

To be hosted under the patronage of **Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al Qasimi**, wife of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah and Chairperson of NAMA, WEEGS is the outcome of the significant partnership between NAMA and UN Women. The summit's theme reaffirms NAMA's dedication to bringing together 'drivers of change' - business and opinion leaders and decision makers from public, private non-profit sectors - on one global platform in Sharjah to lead vibrant and action-oriented discussions focused on developing current strategies and exploring potential opportunities to enhance equitable opportunities for women.

The UAE leadership considers the level of women's empowerment as an indicator for national development. WEEGS was conceived under the vision and patronage of the NAMA Chairperson to further advance the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The event calls upon all sectors of society to pledge a commitment to



*HE Reem Bin Karam, Director of NAMA, speaking at the Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS) in 2017. The second edition of the NAMA / UN Women WEEGS will be held under the theme Drivers of Change on 10 - 11 December 2019 in Sharjah, UAE*

action for the economic empowerment of women. At WEEGS 2019, more than 1,000 high-profile officials and thought leaders will learn, exchange notes, network and take back experiences that will inform and influence global policies, inform grassroots actions, boost women's career prospects in all fields and advocate the formation of inclusive work ecosystems.

Through its programmes and pillars, the second edition of the summit will create a sustainable action plan, with the focus being placed on gender-responsive procurement, women's participation in global value chains, Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP) and women's access to finance and funding. Through the two-day discussions, NAMA aims to reinforce regional and global efforts to find effective and sustainable solutions for women's economic inclusion. The summit will highlight the importance of reviewing legislation, internal regulations and policies of government and private entities while also emphasising the need to bring together all initiatives and efforts working towards the common goal of making a difference and driving change. The summit's theme also points to global trends that are driving efforts towards furthering women's partnership and their pivotal role in new non-traditional sectors and emerging markets, particularly in view of technological advancement, high education rates and the skillsets that enable women to join the labour market.

**HE Reem Bin Karam**, Director of NAMA, has said that WEEGS will evaluate women's achievements in various economic sectors at the national, regional and global levels, adding that the summit aims to develop relevant action plans and best practice mechanisms. The summit is ultimately a reassertion of NAMA's commitment to narrowing the gender gap in the workplace. AIWF is especially proud to have NAMA as a valued AIWF Global Partner and to support NAMA's commendable work with UN Women on the vital WEEGS initiative which the AIWF Board and Members based in the UAE are very much looking forward to attending following the outstanding success of the 2017 Summit.

## AIWF Chairman introduces Professor Jason Furman's session on The Future of Work: Men, Women & Robots at Harvard Women's Leadership Board Fall Meeting 2019

In November 2019 AIWF Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** returned to Cambridge MA to attend the 10th Anniversary of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative and a series of special events around the ALI's anniversary milestone, as well as to attend the Harvard Women's Leadership Board (WLB) Fall 2019 Meeting. As part of the Meeting Agenda, Mrs Al Kaylani was invited by the Harvard Women's Leadership Board, both as Founder & Chairman of AIWF and as a Commissioner of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, to introduce a key session titled *The Future of Work: Men, Women & Robots*, addressed by **Professor Jason Furman**, Professor of the Practice of Economic Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and Senior Fellow at the Peterson Institute.

During his visiting positions at various universities, as well as his time as the Director and Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution's Hamilton Project, Professor Furman has conducted research in a wide range of areas, including fiscal policy, tax policy, health economics, Social Security, technology policy, and domestic and international macroeconomics. In addition to articles in scholarly journals and periodicals, Professor Furman has written two books on economic policy and holds a PhD in economics from Harvard University, his research achievements following eight years as one of President Obama's top economic advisors, serving as the 28th Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers during four of those years. Before the Obama administration, Professor Furman did policy work for the World Bank before joining the Council of Economic Advisors and the National Economic Council under President Clinton.

In her introduction to the session, which took place at the Harvard Kennedy School, Mrs Al Kaylani shared a brief on the ILO Future of Work landmark report which marked the Centenary of the ILO and was published in January 2019 by the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work. The report, she said, put people and the work they do at the center of economic and social policy, and advocated for three core pillars of a 'human-centered, rights-focused' strategy: investing in people's capabilities throughout their life cycle (from their transition to work, through their working



*Haifa Al Kaylani is in Cambridge MA this November to attend the Harvard WLB Fall Meeting 2019 as a longstanding Board Member and Member of the WLB Executive Committee (Photo Credit: Kristen Schueler Photography)*

life and into the post-work phase of their lives); investing in the institutions of work; and investing in decent and sustainable work. Mrs Al Kaylani said: "In all three pillars, responsibility for building a just and equitable future of work lies with all stakeholders and not just governments. We need to recognise the strong, complex and crucial links between trade, financial, economic and social policies", because "the ultimate success of the human-centred growth and development agenda being proposed depends heavily on coherence across these policy areas".

Professor Furman then delivered his impactful and deeply engaging session, starting with an overview of labour markets in the USA and other advanced OECD economies, and of trends in labour employment from 1948 through the 1960s and to the present date. Professor Furman explained the concise factors contributing to inequality and poor labour market outcomes in advanced OECD economies, as measured by the labour market regulation index, collective bargaining coverage, and employment rates for men and women - noting that in the United States, women's employment has increased significantly since 1964 across all education groups. Fundamentally, as Professor Furman demonstrated, inequality based on minimal labour market intervention does not create a 'better economy'.

Professor Furman moved on to the fear of automation and 'robots taking people's jobs', pointing out that this was a common fear in the 1980s, the 1960s, and even as far back as the 1930s, and that even though some tasks of a job could be automated, it was very difficult to automate one's entire job. That being said, automation was likely to put the most pressure on lower-skilled, lower-waged workers. To respond to these challenges, Professor Furman urged caution about designing policy for the 'future' of work, stating that "the large majority of employment is still in traditional employment relationships that would be recognisable to someone in 1980 or 1990" and there was "some evidence that jobs are changing less quickly than in the past."



Predications, he said, are fraught, and it is impossible to do randomised control trials on the future. Some policies are timeless, he said, but we may need them now more than ever, such as more productivity growth, which means more AI / automation; the realisation that job loss is not inevitable but also that "employment is not automatic either". Better-educated workers are better equipped to deal with disruptions to jobs and inequality arising from those disruptions, and he reiterated that worker's bargaining power and the 'safety net' matters because "although the pie will be bigger, not everyone will benefit." Professor Furman concluded: "Do not make policies for the future of work, make them for the recent past of work."

Haifa Al Kaylani has been a Member of the Board of the Harvard Women's Leadership Board for 17 years, and previously served as the Harvard WLB International Vice Chair. She is an active and deeply engaged member of the Harvard WLB Executive Committee, a Fellow of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative, and a dedicated supporter of the philanthropy, mission, growth, and impact of the Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP), the flagstone initiative of the Women's Leadership Board at Harvard which is designed to close gender gaps in economic opportunity, political participation, health, and education. The Harvard Women's Leadership Board is chaired by **Carol Hamilton**, Group President Acquisitions, L'Oréal USA, and is comprised of leaders from the most senior levels of business, academia, and the non-profit sectors that are dedicated to philanthropically supporting WAPPP's mission, growth, and impact.

## AIWF Chairman meets the inspirational Sara Minkara, Founder & CEO of Empowerment Through Integration at Harvard WLB 'In The Dark' Dinner

On 6 November 2019, AIWF Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** had the pleasure of attending the Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP) Dinner hosted by the Harvard Women's Leadership Board (WLB). The Dinner was organised around a very special 'In The Dark' programme developed by **Sara Minkara**, Founder & CEO of Empowerment Through Integration (ETI), a non-profit that develops inclusive programmes to empower youth with disabilities and transform the narrative around disability. ETI's "In the Dark" sessions are transformative, blindfolded experiences that remove visually cued biases and facilitate meaningful discussions and opportunities for learning and growth. Each session is custom designed to address the unique diversity and inclusion goals of clients across all sectors and spaces. Participants learn to acknowledge



*Sara Minkara, Founder & CEO of Empowerment Through Integration (ETI), organisers of the Harvard WLB 'In The Dark' special programme*

and reject existing biases, elevate marginalized voices and promote respect for diversity and individual value in their daily lives, their organizations and beyond.

Lebanese-American Sara, who lost her sight at the age of 7, believes that inclusion is a value for everyone, and that amplifying marginalized voices and promoting robust respect for individual value makes people, families, organizations, and communities stronger. Sara's personal pledge to equip young people with disabilities with the confidence and skills to explore their true potential blossomed as an undergraduate at Wellesley College. With support from the Clinton Foundation, Sara launched ETI while attending college, and expanded its programs and reach while earning her Masters in Public Policy Administration at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Through the Empowerment Programs she creates with ETI, Sara supports individuals with disability in becoming agents of change in their own lives and communities in countries like Lebanon. Through complementary Inclusion Programming (including ETI's flagship 'In The Dark' sessions), Sara facilitates customised education and training experiences for government agencies, private companies, non-profits and academia. Working with the United Nations, the US State Department, leading Foundations and other partners such as Harvard University, The World Bank, and Airbnb, Sara is today an internationally recognised advocate in the areas of disability inclusion, leadership, individual empowerment and social entrepreneurship. Sara leverages her lived experience and professional expertise on disability, inclusion and more to advance authentic inclusion and bring a disability lens to spaces all over the world. She has been featured in the Forbes '30 Under 30' list and has received the Clinton Global Initiative Outstanding Commitment Award and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology IDEAS Global Challenge Award. She is also an Ashoka and Zero Project Impact Transfer Fellow.

Mrs Al Kaylani was most inspired by Sara Minkara's impressive work as an outstanding Arab woman leader to realise her vision for all persons with disabilities

to be valued as individuals and empowered to be their true selves. The Board of AIWF looks forward to welcoming Ms Minkara as a valued Guest Speaker and friend of AIWF to a future AIWF conference in the Arab world or internationally.

**For more information on ETI's work, please visit their website at <https://www.etivision.org/>.**

## **PwC Middle East announces groundbreaking paternity leave policy for all new fathers across the MENA Region**

***Zina Janabi, Middle East Consulting Director & Middle East Women in Business Leader, PwC***



***PwC Middle East has announced three weeks of paternity leave for all new fathers across the region***

As we strive to take more bold actions around Diversity and Inclusion in our region, something that has consistently been raised around this has been about levelling the playing field. Levelling the playing field means that we are not discounting women as equal contributors to society. With this in mind, PwC Middle East has announced three weeks of paternity leave for all new fathers across the region. This is crucial in order to be able to reinforce a measure of equal responsibility for the resilience and growth of our region.

We are also very proud of the work we have achieved to help drive inclusive behaviors in the workplace. One of our biggest success stories this year is our support of Google's #IamRemarkable training programme. The #IamRemarkable initiative was designed to empower women and underrepresented groups to celebrate their achievements in the workplace and beyond. We have now delivered this training to almost 800 of our people in 8 countries across the region; UAE, KSA, Egypt, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and Jordan with an additional 40 colleagues to become facilitators.

We have also influenced the same for our external diversity networks in the UAE.

In support of PwC's commitment to the UN's HeForShe agenda, we have started to build our region wide network of HeForShe Ambassadors. We bring men beyond the conversation; recognising they are part of the solution and equal drivers for change. The HeForShe network will be responsible for delivering bias knowledge training to our people across the region.

## **AIWF Board Member Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby appointed Director General of International Relations at the Ministry of Culture, Saudi Arabia**



***Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, AIWF Board Member and Director General International Relations, Ministry of Culture, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia***

The Board of the Arab International Women's Forum has extended its warmest congratulations to **Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby**, AIWF Board Member and former Secretary General & CEO of the Arab British Chamber of Commerce in London, who earlier this year was appointed Director General of International Relations at the Ministry of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Dr Al Shuaiby has been a senior management executive with over twenty years of comprehensive large-scale management experiences and a successful track recording providing fiscal, strategic and operational leadership in uniquely challenging situations in Saudi Arabia, the wider Arab World, the United Kingdom and the United States. Dr Al Shuaiby held the position of Secretary General and CEO of the Arab British Chamber of Commerce and prior to that, was the advisor to the President of the US-Saudi Arabian Business Council in Washington DC. She also served as Advisor for the Government Affairs and Business Development of Qorvis Communications and Assistant Advisor of the Abu Dhabi Investment Agency.

Dr Al Shuaiby obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from King Saud University, Riyadh, and then furthered her education to earn a Master of Arts in educational administration from the American University and a PhD in Leadership Administration from George Washington University. She has also earned a Certificate in Executive Education from the Harvard Kennedy School.

AIWF is proud to have Dr Al Shuaiby on the Board of AIWF and has long valued her contributions and expertise generously given to the initiatives and strategic direction of AIWF. The AIWF Chairman, Board and Members wish her every success in her role with the Ministry of Culture in Saudi Arabia which will undoubtedly inspire many young women in the Kingdom and throughout the Arab world who aspire to positions of leadership in policy, government and public service.

## AIWF congratulates Board Member Dr Alanoud Alsharekh on her recognition as one of the BBC's 100 Women of 2019

The Board of the Arab International Women's Forum congratulates **Dr Alanoud Alsharekh**, valued AIWF Board Member, Director & Consulting Partner at Ibtakar Strategic Consultancy, and Founding Member of the Abolish 153 campaign, on her recognition in the BBC's 100 Women of 2019 list of inspiring and influential women from around the world. Dr Alsharekh was recognised by the BBC in October 2019 for her work with institutions to advance gender equality in the MENA Region and for her defence of women's rights as a researcher, academic and activist focused on youth and gender demographics, GCC security, and bicultural trends and a specialist in Arab feminist theory. Dr Alsharekh is also a Research Associate at Chatham House and the Arab Gulf Institute in Washington.

An outspoken advocate for women and minority rights in Kuwait, she is a deeply engaged member of Kuwait's thriving civil society and a leading academic who facilitates public discussion and engagement on pivotal issues facing Arab society. She lectures at institutions in the region and abroad and has published numerous books and articles focusing on political identity, cultural politics, gender and kinship policies in the Arabian Gulf. Dr Alsharekh also serves as an advisor to a number of local and international governmental bodies and NGOs, offering her insights on various cultural and socio-political issues in the region. She has worked as a gender politics consultant for UNIFEM, Freedom House, and the UNDP on academic and social outreach projects in Kuwait and the GCC, and at SOAS, London. Her previous posts include Senior Fellow for Regional Politics at the International



*AIWF Board Member Dr Alanoud Alsharekh has been recognised in the BBC's 100 Women of 2019 list of inspiring and influential women from around the world*

Institute of Strategic Studies and Senior Political Analyst at the Kuwait National Security Bureau and Consultant Researcher at the Supreme Council for Development and Planning in Kuwait.

Dr Alsharekh is actively involved with a number of non-profit organisations and civic society groups, including the Arab International Women's Forum and the Abolish 153 campaign to fight honour killing legislation which she founded and currently serves as Chairperson of, as well as being the acting director of the Friends who Care Campaign that seeks to help at-risk young women within Kuwait's social care system. Dr Alsharekh was awarded a knighthood by the French Government in 2016, the National Order of Merit, for her work promoting women's rights in the region, has received the Arab Prize for best publication in a foreign journal (2013-2014) by the Doha Institute in 2014, and won the Voices of Success Kuwait award in 2012.

AIWF is proud to have Dr Alsharekh as a valued Member of the Board of AIWF and reiterates its warmest congratulations on this richly deserved recognition of her commitment and advocacy for women in Kuwait and the broader Arab world.

## AIWF congratulates Jackie Maitland on her appointment to pivotal Shell role

The AIWF Chairman has written on behalf of the Board to **Jackie Maitland** who in October 2019 became General Manager External Relations MENA & JVs for Shell. AIWF deeply values Shell's partnership which dates back to the inception of AIWF in London in 2001 and commenced in 2002 when Shell became AIWF's very first Global Partner.

AIWF and Shell have together delivered a number of significant events and high-impact conferences over the years, all focused on bringing the vital voices of women and young people to the table and promoting the many success stories of Arab women leaders in the



energy sector in the region and globally. In December 2017, Shell lent its full support to AIWF's 10th milestone *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference on *Women-Led Innovation in STEM*, hosted by the Royal Academy of Engineering in London and supported by Shell, the World Bank, PepsiCo and PwC. Shell also led a key panel emphasising the critical gender dimension to the Business & Human Rights movement at the AIWF / IBA *Gender diversity in law and the professions* seminar held at the London Bankside offices of AIWF Global Partner Boodle Hatfield in September 2017.

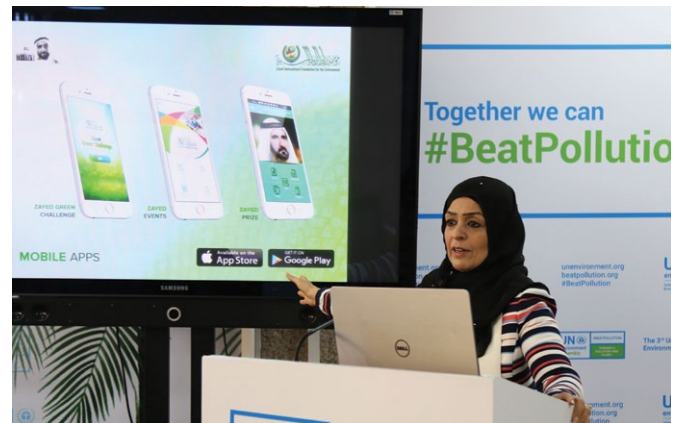


*Shell led a key panel emphasising gender diversity in Business & Human Rights at the AIWF / IBA Gender diversity in law and the professions seminar held in London in September 2017*

AIWF is very much looking forward to working closely with Ms Maitland and her outstanding team at Shell, and to continuing the highly successful and long-term partnership between AIWF and Shell, together addressing key empowerment and environmental issues that impact women and young people in the Arab world and internationally.

## **‘Guiding a New Generation of Learning for Sustainable Change’: AIWF congratulates the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment on the successful launch of the Zayed Green Challenge app**

During her visit to the UAE in October 2019, the AIWF Chairman met with **Dr Meshgan Al Awar**, Secretary General of Zayed International Foundation for the Environment. Founded in 1999 by United Arab Emirates (UAE) Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai **His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment is meant to recognise and encourage environmental achievements supporting and promoting the implementation



*Dr Meshgan Al Awar, Secretary General, Zayed International Foundation for the Environment*

of Agenda 21, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for Sustainable Development, Outcomes of Rio+20 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with the vision and philosophy of the late **Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan**, Founding Father of the UAE. The prestigious award of this Foundation is worth US\$1 million and is awarded in recognition of global leadership, scientific achievements and environmental achievements that have direct impact on society at the regional and global levels. Previous winners include former American President **Jimmy Carter**, former UN Secretary General **Kofi Annan**, and former Norwegian Prime Minister **Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland**.

However, the scope of the Foundation is not limited to Prize awards. The Foundation endeavours to promote sustainable development through propagating awareness, conducting international and regional conferences, workshops and seminars. As part of its ongoing commitment to initiating innovative strategies to promote sustainable development and the protection and appreciation of the environment, under the guidance of the Chairman of the Higher Committee, **Dr Mohammed Ahmed Bin Fahad**, the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment recently launched its latest green education platform, the Zayed Green Challenge, which has been recognized by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) as best practice in its Mapping Tool for education and disseminating knowledge and awareness about the Environment and SDGs.

“The unique hallmark of the app is that it achieves this educational objective through fun, entertainment and engaging games, which I am proud to say, has been downloaded by thousands of people in more than 90 countries,” stated Dr Meshgan Al Awar. She added: “Through this unique format, the Zayed Green Challenge has been able to successfully propagate knowledge about evolving concepts such as green technology. Such advances in smart learning

can prove to be a game changer in tackling critical challenges such as climate change and food security and in uplifting environmental industries and sectors such as sustainable agriculture. By enabling the widespread dissemination of such knowledge and education, the Zayed Green Challenge smart app helps link smart learning with avenues like agriculture through the power of digital technologies to tackle related challenges like reducing food waste, water waste, chemical and fossil fuel inputs, GHG emissions and improving soil management, to empower transformation of the agricultural and other sectors in a similar fashion.”

AIWF extends its full support to Dr Al Awar and the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment in setting a new standard for sustainability education, applying app technology to critical environmental and development challenges for the region. The Zayed Green Challenge app is available for free download on both iOS & Android platforms.

**For more information on the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment, please visit:**  
[www.zayedprize.org.ae](http://www.zayedprize.org.ae)

## AIWF congratulates the Women Lawyers Group Middle East on a successful conference on women and legal reform in Turkey

Founded by **Najwa Attiga**, General Counsel for the Emirates Investment Authority and longstanding friend and supporter of the Arab International Women's Forum, the Women Lawyer's Group Middle East (WLGME) was proud to hold a conference on *Women's Economic Empowerment Through Legal Reform* in Istanbul, Turkey in October 2019 in collaboration with Istanbul Kultur University. The event focused mainly on examining and debating the issues concerning the role of laws and the evolution of legal reforms in empowering women economically. It was an excellent opportunity to bring into focus issues of shared interest and concern, aiming to provide a genuinely interactive platform to discuss routes and barriers to the active economic participation of women in the public and the private sectors in the MENA region.

The conference was the third in a series held by the WLGME to examine women's economic empowerment through legal reform, as the economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development. The conference delivered an

outstanding full day of discussions on legal reform as key to gender equality and women's full participation in the economy, including on how to address gender disparity in access to internet and technology which could significantly increase women's financial inclusion, and how to overcome women's lack of access to financial services. The programme was enriched by the invaluable input of the guest speakers, members of the WLGME, guests from the public and private sectors in Istanbul in addition to members of the Faculty of Law and students of Istanbul Kultur University.



*Najwa Attiga, who was a Guest Speaker at the April 2017 Young Arab Women Leaders Conference in Morocco and at AIWF's September 2017 Gender diversity in law and the professions seminar held in London, chaired the WLGME conference on Women's Economic Empowerment Through Legal Reform in Istanbul, Turkey.*

The opening session was addressed by the Deputy Minister of Trade of Turkey, the President of Istanbul Kultur University, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, and Najwa Attiga, who in her keynote speech, restated the commitment of WLGME to working on key issues related to women's economic empowerment, showing what women have achieved in the struggle for their rights in the economic, political, social and cultural domain as well as working on the concerns and issues that still exist. She stated that, to varying degrees across the MENA countries, women still face gender discrimination which is built into cultural attitudes, government policies and legal frameworks in a way that prevents them from reaching their potential despite positive gains in education, healthcare and employment. She further highlighted how in some Arab countries, legal loopholes, poor enforcement of the laws and discriminatory practices can undercut formal legal guarantees and rights for women even when enshrined in laws and policies.

The first panel of the day was dedicated to explaining how having appropriate legislation is necessary to ensure further participation by women in the formal economy and to encourage entrepreneurship. The second panel focused on what needs to be done in the MENA region to address and bridge the "digital gender divide", notably looking at reform through

laws, policies, education and support both from governments and the business community. The third and final panel highlighted the importance of access to finance for individuals and households, the main legal and regulatory barriers to women's access to finance plus the challenges that women entrepreneurs and employers face in gaining access to financial products and services.

The first day of the conference concluded with key recommendations and closing remarks which were delivered by **Raya Abu Gulal**, Founder of the Women Lawyers Group Middle East, and **Professor Dr Bahri Ozturk**, Dean of the Faculty of Law, both of whom reiterated that it will take sound laws and policies, a holistic approach to a reform of laws discriminating against women, the enactment of legislation enabling gender equality, and a long term commitment from all players in the public and private sectors, in civil society plus a sustained effort at a dialogue with all elements of society both men and women in order to advance significantly in the long and slow journey towards achieving women's economic empowerment in the MENA region. On the second day of the conference, the organizers, the distinguished speakers and the guests enjoyed a visit to the Court of First Instance in Istanbul where they were briefed by the Head Judge and the Head Prosecutor on the legal system in Turkey.

AIWF commends the Women Lawyers Group Middle East for its organization of an invaluable forum highlighting the important role of women in law, and fully supports the Group's mission to establish a quality forum for the exchange of knowledge, experience, initiatives and projects among women in the legal sphere. AIWF looks forward to working closely with the Group on future initiatives to empower and support women in law and the professions, and to welcoming Ms Attiga and the valued members of the WLGME to future AIWF conferences in the MENA Region and internationally.



For more information on AIWF's history, mission, programmes and publications, or to join AIWF as an individual, corporate or student / new graduate member, please visit **[www.aiwfonline.com](http://www.aiwfonline.com)**

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## Roula Khalaf appointed first female editor of the Financial Times in the FT's 130-year history



*Roula Khalaf has been appointed Editor of the Financial Times effective January 2020 (Photo Credit: Financial Times)*

**Haifa Al Kaylani**, AIWF Founder & Chairman, has written to extend the sincere congratulations of the AIWF Board to **Roula Khalaf** on her recent and richly deserved appointment as the first female Editor of the Financial Times in the FT's 130-year history.

Ms Khalaf, who was born and raised in Beirut, has served as Deputy Editor of the FT since 2016 and previously led the FT's foreign correspondents' network and its coverage of the Arab uprisings from 2011. Ms Khalaf has said that she is "thrilled" to have been chosen to lead "the greatest news organisation in the world".

Ms Khalaf's appointment is truly a pathbreaking milestone for women in global media leadership and will greatly inspire young women in the Arab region and internationally aspiring to a future in journalism. AIWF deeply values its many collaborations over the years with the Financial Times, having worked closely with the FT on several Special Reports highlighting the successes of women in the Arab world.

The Board of AIWF reiterates its warmest congratulations to Ms Khalaf and looks forward to collaborating further with the FT on Special Reports in 2020 and beyond.

## Date of next issue

The next edition of the AIWF Newsletter will be published in March 2020. AIWF Global Partners, members, friends and supporters are kindly requested to contact the Editor at [info@aiwfonline.com](mailto:info@aiwfonline.com) on or before 15 February 2020 to contribute articles, photos and news.