



ARAB INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S FORUM

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

WOMEN IN SUSTAINABILITY,
ENVIRONMENT AND
RENEWABLE ENERGY



AIWF x WiSER High-Level Conference
London Climate Action Week 2025

Women Building Resilient Communities

Tuesday 24 June 2025 | 09:30 – 17:00

Royal Academy of Engineering | London, UK

Scan for Conference
Participants List



Welcome from the Arab International Women's Forum



Haifa Al Kaylani OBE

President & Founder, Arab International Women's Forum

I am delighted to welcome you all for our conference, 'Women Building Resilient Communities', hosted by AIWF and the Women in Sustainability, Environment and Renewable Energy initiative (WiSER). AIWF is exceptionally proud of our institutional partnership with WiSER and to be joining forces today for this very special conference. We look forward to many more joint initiatives in the future that can inspire these vital conversations on sustainability challenges, opportunities and new possibilities for women to truly transform the future for us all.

Today's conference could not be timelier nor indeed more relevant. In the MENA and globally, women and young people are at the heart of sustainable development and resilience building, and we will simply not be able to solve global climate and sustainability crises without them. Women bring unique perspectives, experiences and ideas that nurture much-needed innovation in sustainability and climate solutions. Women often have the deepest understanding of their communities' needs and are more likely to develop and implement gender-sensitive solutions that consider the specific vulnerabilities and capacities, leading to more inclusive and sustainable action.

As studies have shown, when women have equal access to resources and opportunities, they tend to invest in the wellbeing of their families and communities, further contributing to sustainable development and breaking generational cycles of economic inequality and social deprivation. Women also play crucial roles in grassroots movements and community-based initiatives, decisively addressing climate change and promoting sustainable practices deeply rooted in traditional knowledge but ripe for innovation with the use of data and AI.

Ultimately, empowering women and ensuring their full participation in all aspects of climate action is to tap into a vast pool of talent, knowledge, and creativity that can truly deliver female-led solutions that can shape the sustainable, equitable, prosperous and above all peaceful future we all want to see for our future generations. And by bringing MENA women together with their international counterparts, as we are doing today, we are taking decisive, collective action to tackle the very worst impacts of climate change and build that sustainable, resilient, and equitable world for all.

We trust that today's conference, with your valued participation and contributions, will be a deeply enriching, informative, and truly productive experience for you, where we can all benefit from our shared exchange of ideas, culture, and insight.



Dr Lamya Fawwaz

Executive Director of Brand and Strategic Initiatives at Masdar, and Program Director of WiSER

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the WiSER x AIWF Conference on the sidelines of the London Climate Action Week 2025.

As we come together to shape more inclusive and resilient societies, gatherings like this highlight the extraordinary potential of dialogue, collaboration, and shared purpose. With diverse experiences and insights in the room, we are united by a shared belief: that empowering women is key to unlocking lasting sustainability, driving socioeconomic progress, and strengthening communities everywhere.

Through WiSER, we have spent the past decade transforming this belief into action, by mentoring future leaders, building capacity, and creating space for women's voices in sustainability and technology. This work thrives on strong partnerships, which is why we are proud to co-host this conference alongside the Arab International Women's Forum.

Today's panel sessions will explore some of the most critical areas for advancing sustainable development, from ensuring food security through climate-resilient agriculture, to examining the role of AI and data in driving gender-responsive climate action. We will also look at how to bridge the climate finance gap, develop inclusive finance models for women-led innovation, and empower the next generation of leaders through education, entrepreneurship, and opportunity.

To our delegates, speakers, and guests – I invite you to use this platform to forge new connections, challenge conventional thinking, and lead the change our world urgently needs, by turning ideas into impact, and conversations into concrete action.

Together, let's accelerate WiSER's mission to not only champion women's leadership as a catalyst for innovation, equity and sustainable growth, but to shape a future where every community can thrive.

Conference Themes & Objectives

'Those who are most affected by climate change today – women, girls and marginalised communities – must be involved in the design and implementation of climate response actions to ensure the equal sharing of benefits.' **UN Women.**

On Tuesday 24 June 2025, AIWF and WiSER return to the Royal Academy of Engineering in London to connect young women leaders with change makers from the public, private, NGO, STEM and environmental sectors for our conference, 'Women Building Resilient Communities'.

Hosted on the sidelines of London Climate Action Week 2025, the conference will focus on the exciting and critical opportunities for women and young leaders to be at the heart of climate justice, action and dialogue.

Panel sessions will spotlight and explore five critical themes:

- Addressing **food security** hurdles through sustainable agricultural methods, agricultural technology, and enhancing climate resilience in our food systems.
- Investigating the **crucial role of AI and data** in assessing the effects of climate change on women and girls, and promoting gender-responsive climate actions.
- **Bridging the climate finance gap**, with a specific emphasis on broadening inclusion and improving access for female-led climate innovation.
- Creating **inclusive climate finance models** to enhance climate innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Developing future leaders** in climate and sustainability through education, entrepreneurship and employability / human skills development.

As with all AIWF and WiSER events and initiatives, we look forward to welcoming distinguished business and civil society sustainability leaders from around the world, including the UK, Europe, MENA and Africa, both as panel speakers and as valued guests.

Please scan the QR code to view the full list of conference participants.



Scan for
Participants List



Conference Background

On 10 May 2023, ahead of the UAE hosting the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 in Dubai in November that year, the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) and Women in Sustainability, Environment and Renewable Energy (WiSER) joined forces for a major one-day conference, 'On the Road to COP28', that championed women's collective spirit for innovation.

This conference built on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on International Women's Day 2021 between AIWF and WiSER, that focused on a shared commitment to empowering young female leaders across the UK, UAE, and the wider MENA region.

The 2023 event marked a significant milestone in the AIWF and WiSER partnership, providing a unique and inclusive platform to forge new alliances in line with the spirit of SDG17 ('Partnerships for the Goals') and SDG5 (Gender Equality). This initiative ensured that the voices and interests of women and young leaders remained central in pivotal discussions concerning climate action, food security, water resilience, clean energy, the future of work, responsible business practices, sustainable financing, innovation, and technology-driven economies.

Held in the lead-up to COP28, the conference focused on the ways women are working to mitigate challenges to women's leadership and inclusion through science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) innovation, education and entrepreneurship. The program aimed to advance innovative solutions to climate and sustainability challenges which disproportionately affect women and young people living in the MENA region.

Key learnings and recommendations emerging from the panel sessions were captured in a report and a series of recommendations that were published jointly by AIWF and WiSER in November 2023.

View the full report and recommendations on the AIWF website.



Conference Programme

0930 – 1000 Registration & Coffee / Networking

OPENING SESSION

1000 – 1030 **Haifa Al Kaylani OBE**, President & Founder, Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF), UK; Commissioner, ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work (2017-2019); Fellow, Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative 2017; Advisory Council Member, World Agriculture Forum

Dr Lamya Fawwaz, Executive Director of Brand and Strategic Initiatives at Masdar, and Program Director of WiSER

Her Excellency Dr Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, Member of the UAE Cabinet

Dina Saleh, Managing Director and Chief of Staff, Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy

Dr Angela Wilkinson, Secretary General, World Energy Council, UK

PILLAR I: INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

1030 – 1110 Panel | Transforming Food & Water Systems for Climate Resilience

Food and water systems are under increasing stress due to rising temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns, water scarcity, and land degradation, particularly in climate-vulnerable regions such as the MENA. Women, who play a central role in agricultural production, food security, and water stewardship, are often excluded from key decision-making processes and denied equitable access to land, finance and technology. This session will spotlight scalable, female-led solutions that are transforming food and water systems to build climate resilience at the community and regional levels. Panellists will present case studies from across MENA and other regions that demonstrate how women are leading innovations in regenerative agriculture, sustainable irrigation, soil restoration, water harvesting, agroecology and circular farming, integrating traditional knowledge, digital tools and climate-smart practices to restore ecosystems, improve food security and secure sustainable livelihoods.

Session Chair

Haifa Al Kaylani OBE, President & Founder, Arab International Women's Forum, UK

Guest Speakers

Julian Lampietti, Program Manager of the Livable Landscapes Knowledge Academy, The World Bank, USA

Dina Saleh, Managing Director and Chief of Staff, Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy

Hassan Halawy, CEO, Elite Agro Projects LLC, UAE

Joanna Purcell, Head of Partnerships, Crop Trust, Germany

1110 - 1130

Networking & Refreshments

1130 - 1210

Panel | AI for Equitable Climate Action

This session brings together expert panelists to explore the intersection of gender, climate resilience, and artificial intelligence (AI). As the climate crisis intensifies, women around the world are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, food insecurity and displacement, yet they are also powerful agents of change in building adaptive, low-carbon, and socially inclusive solutions. The discussion will highlight how AI technologies can be responsibly developed and applied to address climate-related challenges in agriculture, energy, water management and disaster risk reduction. The session will critically examine issues of data bias, access, and algorithmic fairness to ensure that the deployment of AI supports gender equity rather than reinforcing structural inequalities.

Session Chair

Professor Rym Ayadi, Founder and President, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association; Professor, Bayes Business School, City University of London; Co-Founder of the Brain Capital Alliance and Brain Economy Hub, Spain

Guest Speakers

Her Excellency Dr Nawal Al-Hosany, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, UAE

Professor Dhiya Al Jumeily OBE, Professor of Artificial Intelligence, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

Dr Anand Verma, Founder & CEO, Expect AI, UK

1210 - 1230

Short Talk Series | AI, Climate & Urban Futures

TED-style presentations featuring visionaries from grassroots activists to established climate leaders showcasing personal journeys, bold ideas, and calls to action.

Guest Speakers

Elena Sinel, Founder of Teens in AI, UK

Sarah El Battouty, Global Ambassador UN High-Level Climate Champions UNFCCC, Architect & Founder of ECONSULT, Board of Governors at The National Council for Women, Egypt

PILLAR II: ACCESS TO FINANCE

1230 – 1310

Panel | Financing Women-Led Climate Ventures

Access to finance remains one of the most persistent barriers for female entrepreneurs in the climate innovation space, despite growing global recognition of the need to support gender-inclusive and climate-resilient economies. This session will demystify the complex funding landscape, unpacking various instruments such as impact investing, blended finance, green bonds, concessional loans and microfinance, with a specific focus on how they can be harnessed to support women-led climate ventures. Panelists will offer practical guidance on navigating investment ecosystems, building investable business models, and aligning climate-focused solutions with the priorities of institutional and mission-driven funders. The discussion will also address systemic challenges, including risk perceptions around female-led enterprises, gender gaps in decision-making across financial institutions, and the need for tailored financial products that reflect the realities of women operating in both formal and informal economies.

Session Chair

Nadine El Habbal, Founder & Director, Further Edge; Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Arabia Insurance Cooperative Co (AICC), UK

Guest Speakers

Wedad Almarzooqi, Head of Sustainability, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, WiSER Pioneer, UAE

May Al Karooni, CEO and Founder of Globechain, UK

Constance Chalchat, Chief Sustainability Officer, CIB and Global Markets, BNP Paribas, UK

Sophia Swire, Founder & CEO, GEDI (Gender Equity Diversity Investments Ltd), UK



1310 – 1350

Panel | Bridging the Financing Gap for Women-Led Climate Enterprises

In this panel, we explore innovative financial instruments and partnership models, from carbon credits to climate bonds, to help women entrepreneurs access and manage capital for scalable climate solutions. Panelists will examine how tools such as carbon credit markets, green and climate bonds, results-based financing and catalytic capital can be adapted to support enterprises led by women across diverse climate sectors. The session explores how blended finance structures, combining public, private and philanthropic resources and partnerships, can reduce risk and unlock capital for early-stage innovations with high social and environmental returns. The session also examines the importance of gender-responsive finance and inclusive investment criteria, as well as how women entrepreneurs can measure and communicate the impact of their ventures to attract diverse sources of capital.

Session Chair

Dana Kupova, Head of Inclusive Financial Systems, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), UK

Guest Speakers

Michael Liebreich, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Liebreich Associates, UK

Maxine Chehab, Senior Investment Manager, Germany

1350 – 1440

Sustainable Buffet Lunch & Networking

1440 – 1500

Short Talk Series | STEM, Society & Shared Futures

TED-style presentations featuring visionaries from grassroots activists to established climate leaders showcasing personal journeys, bold ideas, and calls to action.

Guest Speakers

Dr Hanan Albuflasa, Assistant Professor of Renewable Energy, University of Bahrain; former Acting Director General of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs, Bahrain

Alexis McGivern, Head of Stakeholder Engagement, Oxford Net Zero, University of Oxford, UK

PILLAR III: POLICY & LEADERSHIP

1500 – 1540

Panel | How Local Solutions Can Feed into Broader Policy

Local communities are often the first to experience the effects of climate change, and they are also among the most innovative in developing practical, context-specific responses. This session explores how grassroots climate solutions, particularly those led by women, can gain visibility, attract investment and inform broader policy frameworks at national and international levels. Panelists will discuss enabling factors that help local solutions scale and influence decision-making, including participatory policy design, inclusive data collection and partnerships with development agencies, municipalities and philanthropic actors. The conversation will also address structural barriers that prevent many women-led initiatives from being recognised or supported by formal institutions. The session will deliver clearer understanding of how local leadership of women is not only essential for community resilience but also critical for informing inclusive, effective, and scalable climate policy at national and regional levels.

Session Chair

Dina Saleh, Managing Director and Chief of Staff, Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy

Guest Speakers

Hajar Al Ketbi, Director of Government Communication, Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, UAE

Professor Hayat Sindi, Founder & CEO of 'iQ' Institute for Quality; Goodwill Ambassador for STEM at UNESCO; Honorary Fellow at Newnham College, University of Cambridge, UK

Lamé Verre, Co-founder & Chair Advisory Board, Lean In Equity & Sustainability, UK

Camilla Melis, MTE Climate Ambassador - World Bank Group; former Advisor to the G7 Italian Presidency; G20 EU Youth Delegate; WiSER Pioneer

1540 - 1620

Panel | Empowering Next-Generation Sustainability Leaders

Young people are at the forefront of the climate movement, not only as activists but also as entrepreneurs, educators, researchers, and communicators driving systems-level change, challenging outdated models and creating new pathways for climate justice. This session will explore the vital role of next-generation sustainability leaders in shaping more inclusive, innovative, and accountable responses to the climate crisis, using education, digital media, advocacy and community mobilization to generate impact, launching climate tech start-ups, leading local adaptation projects and engaging in international climate negotiations. The session will explore key enablers of youth leadership, including access to funding, mentorship and the development of skills that are essential to creating cross-generational dialogue, amplifying underrepresented voices and supporting youth-led sustainability efforts to flourish at scale.

Session Chair

Dr Christelle Comair, Head of Women's Research Centre, Royal University for Women, Bahrain

Guest Speakers

Fatma Behzad Afghan, Drainage Systems Projects Engineer, Sewerage and Recyclewater Projects, WiSER Pioneer, UAE

Gihan Hyde, CEO, CommUnique, UK

Dr Souad Mohamed, Strategic Advisor on Leadership Development and Women's Advancement (UK, MENA, Africa); Senior Visiting Fellow and Programme for Africa Leadership Faculty, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), UK

Amina Sundby Merkebawi, Sustainable Development Specialist & Senior Manager of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation, TAG International, Board Member, Kantar Advisory Partners, UK

1620 - 1630

Networking & Refreshments

1630 - 1700

Fireside Chat | Women-Led Governance in Climate

In conversation with senior women leaders, exploring personal experiences, lessons learned, and recommendations for accelerating women-led solutions in climate and other areas of governance.

Session Chair

Kate Hampton OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), UK

Guest Speakers

Her Excellency Dr Nawal Al-Hosany, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, UAE

Mercedes Vela Monserrate, Chief Executive Officer, Global Climate Finance Center (GCFC), UAE

1700

Closing Remarks

Haifa Al Kaylani OBE, President & Founder, Arab International Women's Forum, UK



Haifa Al Kaylani OBE

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

Haifa Al Kaylani OBE is President & Founder of the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF), recognised in Arab and international government, private sector and NGO circles as a high-impact change agent focused on women's leadership and youth empowerment, working for progress, inclusion, peace and prosperity in the Arab region and internationally. Haifa founded AIWF in London in 2001 as a development organization committed to supporting women's leadership in social and economic growth in the MENA and internationally. Haifa served as the Chair of AIWF for 20 years and in 2023, she was appointed to the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in King Charles' 2024 New Year Honours List, in recognition of her services to Women, Young People and to Cultural Relations between the United Kingdom and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Haifa is a development economist, an alumna of the American University of Beirut and read for a Diploma in Economic Development at Oxford University. She brings a wide range of skills and experience to her personal mission of encouraging greater cultural understanding and sustainable economic growth and reform, supporting a strong role for women and young leaders at the heart of that process. Haifa became a Fellow of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative in 2017, spending a year in Cambridge MA to undertake the year-long intensive Fellowship to research and address global sustainability challenges. A key outcome from her year at Harvard is a sustainability enterprise project which she launched in Jordan as an innovative model for sustainable development through agriculture across the MENA region, introducing modern 21st century technology and innovation to the agricultural sector to create viable jobs for local communities for men and women, including refugees.

Haifa holds senior roles in several cultural, educational, non-governmental UK, MENA and international organisations. She is a Board Member of the Arab British Chamber of Commerce in London, a Member of The Stimson East West Council on Track II Diplomacy, a Global Advisory Committee Member of QS and Advisory Council Member of the World Agriculture Forum, a dedicated and active member of the global Harvard Community and a longstanding Harvard Women's Leadership Board (WLB) Member, having been a member of the Harvard WLB for 20 years and a member of the WLB Executive Committee. Haifa was appointed as the only Commissioner from the Arab world to the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work in August 2017 and served in 2012 on the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance chaired by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. She has received numerous regional and global awards for her efforts to enable and advance women and youth through education and economic engagement in the MENA region and beyond.



Dr Lamya Fawwaz

Executive Director of Brand and Strategic Initiatives at Masdar, and Program Director of WiSER

Dr Lamya Fawwaz is Executive Director of Brand & Strategic Initiatives at Masdar responsible for spearheading the company's global image and driving its mission to accelerate the world's energy transformation.

Her track record includes directing Masdar's communication, marketing, and branding strategies, aligning them with the company's vision to be a leader in renewables and green hydrogen, and supporting the UAE's ambitious Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative.

Dr Fawwaz spearheads Masdar's strategic initiatives, including Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, a global initiative championed by the UAE and Masdar to accelerate sustainable development and advance economic, social and environmental progress; Women in Sustainability, Environment, and Renewable Energy (WiSER), a platform that inspires women to play an active role in addressing sustainability challenges; and Youth 4 Sustainability (Y4S), a platform dedicated to nurturing the next generation of sustainability leaders through training and real-world experience.

Additionally, she plays a multifaceted role as the Director of the Zayed Sustainability Prize, the UAE's pioneering global award that recognizes excellence in sustainability. Established in 2008, the Zayed Sustainability Prize honors the humanitarian and sustainability legacy of the late founding father of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, by rewarding organizations and high schools that are delivering impactful, innovative and inspiring solutions in health, food, energy, water and climate action.

Dr Fawwaz's background includes being Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Public Affairs at the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology and serving as a member of the Private Sector Advisory Council to the UAE's National Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr Fawwaz graduated with honors (Cum Laude) from the George Washington University with a Doctorate in higher education administration and a Master's degree in Information System Technology.



Her Excellency Dr Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak

**Minister of Climate Change and Environment, UAE
Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, Member of
the UAE Cabinet**

Her Excellency Dr Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak serves as the UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment, and Member of the UAE Cabinet. HE Dr Al Dahak is responsible for implementing and leading national initiatives related to environmental protection, biodiversity, climate change and food systems as well as enhancing governmental excellence by delivering best-in-class service to the community. HE leads the Ministry's work in partnership with other government entities, the private sector, startups, and the local community to support the nation's efforts to achieve net zero by 2050, protect and promote the country's unique natural environment, accelerate climate action, grow the agriculture and fishing sectors, develop agricultural technologies, safeguard land ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, and ensure national food security.

Since her appointment as the Minister of Climate Change and Environment in January 2024, HE has represented the UAE at leading international forums including COP29 (Azerbaijan), COP16 (Saudi Arabia & Colombia) and UNGA. HE has also led several trailblazing national project launches such as the Plant the Emirates National Programme, the National Agriculture Centre and the Emirates Agriculture Conference and Exhibition.

Alongside her Ministerial role, Her Excellency Dr Al Dahak chairs several national councils and committees, including the UAE Council for Climate Action, the Emirates Council for Food Security (ECFS), and the UAE Council for Environmental and Municipal Work. She is also a Board Member of the National Committee of the Biosecurity, and the Supreme Committee for the Exploitation, Protection and Development of Living Aquatic Resources. Her Excellency is also a board member of the Mohamed bin Zayed Water Initiative, the Trustees of the Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, Sheraa's Board of Advisors, the Trustees of the Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation, the UAEU's Board of Trustees, the Emirates Council for Rural Development, the Board of Trustees of Ajman University, and the Board of Directors of the Al Mubarakah Foundation. Additionally, HE Dr Al Dahak chairs the Supreme Committee for the Food Innovation Hub UAE.

Prior to her appointment as Minister of Climate Change and Environment, Her Excellency was responsible for leading a wide range of strategic initiatives at the Ministry of Education as Assistant Undersecretary for the Care and Capacity Building Sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Her Excellency served as the UAE Government Spokesperson.

Armed with a distinguished academic track-record HE brings a scientific and evidence-based philosophy to her work at MOCCA. HE holds a PhD in Computer Engineering from Khalifa University and Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Computer Science from the University of Sharjah, in addition to the UAE Government Innovation Diploma.

Opening Keynote Session



Dina Saleh

Managing Director and Chief of Staff, Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy

Dina Saleh is the Managing Director and Chief of Staff in the Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV) in IFAD. Before that, she was the Regional Director for Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia (NEN). Ms Saleh has over 30 years' experience in agriculture and rural development in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. She also served as the Sub-Regional Director based in Cairo, Regional Portfolio Adviser for the Near East, North Africa and Europe Division. Prior to joining IFAD in 2007, Ms Saleh worked at the United Nations Office for Project Services in Nairobi, Tunis and Rome and with private sector companies. She holds an MSc from the University of London in Development Finance.



Dr Angela Wilkinson

Secretary General, World Energy Council, UK

Angela is the World Energy Council's sixth Secretary General since its founding in 1923. Angela is one of the world's leading global energy futures experts, an experienced energy executive, a distinguished Oxford scholar and a published author. She has 30 years of experience in leading national, international and global multi-stakeholder transformation initiatives on a wide range of economic, energy, climate and sustainable development related challenges. Angela has worked as a senior executive in the public-, private-, academic- and civic sectors. She was appointed Secretary General and CEO of the World Energy Council in 2019. Angela joined the Council in 2017 to create a practical energy transition leaders toolkit and direct a new strategic insights programme. Prior to that Angela led an upgrade in strategic foresight at the OECD, based in Paris. Prior corporate experience includes decades in Royal Dutch Shell and British Gas plc. Angela is a Fellow of the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) Centre for Strategic Foresight, an International Advisory Board Member of the Russian Higher School of Economics, Moscow (HSE), and a Fellow of the World Academy of Arts and Science (WAAS). She has published four books and numerous articles. Angela has a PhD in Physics.

PILLAR I INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Panel Transforming Food & Water Systems for Climate Resilience

Session Chair



Haifa Al Kaylani OBE

President & Founder, Arab International Women's Forum, UK

Session Speakers



Julian Lampietti

Program Manager of the Livable Landscapes Knowledge Academy, The World Bank, USA

Julian Lampietti is the Program Manager of the Livable Landscapes Knowledge Academy at the World Bank, where he leads strategic planning, donor engagement, and oversight of global knowledge and advisory initiatives under the Planet Vice-Presidency. He also serves as an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service where he teaches a course on food systems transformation. Previously, Julian managed global engagements for the Agriculture and Food Global Practice. Prior to that he led agricultural and food security programs in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia. He has published extensively on poverty, gender, economics, food security, and energy. Recent flagship reports that he worked on include What's Cooking: Digital Transformation of the Agrifood System and Recipe for a Livable Planet: Achieving Net Zero Emissions in the Agrifood System. Julian holds a PhD in Public Policy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master's degree in Natural Resource Economics from Duke University.



Dina Saleh

Managing Director and Chief of Staff, Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy



Hassan Halawy

CEO, Elite Agro Projects LLC, UAE

Hassan Halawy is an agritech leader and fourth-generation agriculturalist with over two decades of multinational experience spanning Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. As CEO of Elite Agritech, he spearheads one of the region's most influential agricultural innovation firms, delivering large-scale, climate-resilient food production systems across more than eight countries in Africa, the Balkans, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. Rooted in a century-long legacy of industrial farming dating back to his family's pioneering ventures in West Africa in the 1920s, Hassan combines generational insight with forward-thinking innovation. He holds a degree in Agricultural Engineering from the American University of Beirut, and has built a career defined by operational excellence, sustainable transformation, and cross-cultural leadership. Hassan began his professional journey in Nigeria, gaining deep operational expertise in large-scale farming and agri-business. He later transitioned to the UAE, where he has become a catalyst for agricultural modernization. Under his leadership, Elite Agritech has advanced the adoption of controlled-environment agriculture (CEA), precision irrigation, and Advanced Technologies, transforming productivity in arid and resource-challenged regions.

His leadership extends beyond the field: Hassan is a prominent voice in the global food security dialogue. He has been featured as a keynote speaker and panelist at leading platforms including COP16 in Riyadh, Expo 2020 Dubai, Vision Golfe in Paris, and regional policy forums led by MOCCA and FAO. His thought leadership highlights the strategic convergence of technology, policy, and local expertise to build resilient food systems. In addition to his agricultural credentials, Hassan holds certification in Data Protection and GDPR Compliance, enabling him to steer digital transformation in agritech with a focus on secure, scalable innovation infrastructures.



Joanna Purcell

Head of Partnerships, Crop Trust, Germany

Joanna Purcell represents partnerships at the Global Crop Diversity Trust, working with partners and donors to advance collective goals and ensuring the flow and care of funding and support towards safeguarding the world's crop diversity and food security. The Crop Trust manages the Crop Diversity Endowment Fund, which provides stable, long-term funding for genebanks worldwide. This fund ensures that key genebanks, including the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, can operate at high standards, safeguarding essential crop varieties for future generations. Joanna brings over a decade of building strategic partnerships in the food security space across diverse global contexts and sectors. At the United Nations World Food Programme, she led partnerships for the Innovation Accelerator in Munich and undertook extended humanitarian and development missions, designing strategies, liaising with donors, and securing vital funding for WFP country offices in Egypt, Afghanistan, and Nepal. Joanna has also worked with grassroots organizations in Peru, and before moving into international development, she worked as a teacher of adult learners in Italy, the United Kingdom, and her home country of Ireland – experiences that sparked her deep curiosity about cross-cultural connection, storytelling and collaboration.

Panel AI for Equitable Climate Action

Session Chair



Professor Rym Ayadi

EMEA Founder and President, Professor at the Bayes Business School, City University of London, Co-Founder of the Brain Capital Alliance and of the Brain Economy Hub, Spain

Professor Rym Ayadi is Founder and President of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), a Barcelona based regional Think Tank that serves as a leading independent and innovative policy research institution. Co-Founder of the Brain Capital Alliance and the Brain Economy Hub, and founder and Director of the Euro-Mediterranean and African Network for Economic Studies (EMANES), Professor at the Bayes Business School, City St George's, University of London, and Senior Advisor at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS). She served as the Chair of the European Banking Authority (EBA) Banking Stakeholders Group (BSG) of which she acted as elected Chair from February 2019 to July 2024. Professor Ayadi is an Economist and international academic expert on international business and financial systems, financial markets and institutions, global financial regulation and governance, and socio-economic development and foresight in economies in transition. She is currently a member of several international high-level Academic, Advisory Committees and Editing Boards.

Session Speakers



Her Excellency Dr Nawal Al-Hosany

Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, UAE

Her Excellency Dr Nawal Al-Hosany is a global leader of national and international efforts to accelerate the transformation to a net-zero economy. Currently serving as the Permanent Representative of the UAE to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), where she supports the Agency's efforts in fast-tracking a just and inclusive global energy transition. In addition to her current role, Dr Al-Hosany is also an active and prominent member of several key international, regional and local climate-focused boards and committees, including the COP28 UAE Advisory Committee, which convenes the expertise of climate and energy leaders from around the world; the American University of Sharjah (AUS) where she sits on the Board of Trustees; and as the Vice Chair for the Global Council of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dr Nawal Al-Hosany sits on the

advisory council of National Geographic magazine, the advisory board of the Payne Institute in the Colorado School of Mines, and the advisory panel for the Momentum for Change initiative of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Dr Al-Hosany's endless commitment to climate action is born from a lifelong commitment to public service and duty. She has built a portfolio of influence and reach through key roles in renewable energy, sustainability, and climate action including the Executive Director of Sustainability at Masdar, Abu Dhabi's leading international renewable energy entity. Between 2011 and 2018, held the post of Director of the Zayed Future Energy Prize, now known as the Zayed Sustainability Prize, where she remains an active jury member. Additionally, she held the role of Deputy Director General at the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (AGDA), formerly known as the Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA) from 2017 to 2018. Dr Al-Hosany's professional achievements have been widely recognised. Most recently, Dr Al-Hosany received the President's Award from the Energy Institute, becoming the first woman from the Middle East to be bestowed with the prestigious honour. In July 2018, Dr Al-Hosany was presented with the Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa from Keele University in the UK in recognition for her achievements in the field of sustainability. Dr Al-Hosany also received the Arab Woman Award and the Emirates Business Women Award. Dr Al-Hosany is also one of the first two Emirati women to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest free-standing mountain in the world at 5,895 meters above sea-level. Dr Al-Hosany's personal and professional journey has taken her around the world, engaging with key climate and sustainability leaders from the Global South to the Global North, and where she has helped support and shape the global energy discourse. Dr Al-Hosany graduated from the Faculty of Engineering at the UAE University in 1992 and attained her PhD from Newcastle University in the United Kingdom in 2002.



Professor Dhiya Al-Jumeily OBE

Professor of Artificial Intelligence, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

Dhiya's academic journey began back in Iraq where he grew up, gaining his first degree in mathematics at the University of Baghdad in 1988. Seeking to expand his horizons, he embarked on an academic pursuit that led him here to the city of Liverpool, where he acquired his master's in software engineering from the University of Liverpool in 1992. Dhiya's passion for education brought him to LJMU where he completed an MPhil in Computer Science in 1995 and a PhD in Intelligent Software Development in 2000. These formative years equipped him with a deep understanding of the theoretical principles and practical applications in computing and mathematics, laying the groundwork for his groundbreaking contributions to the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Professor Al-Jumeily has made significant contributions through his expertise in AI to advancements in medicine, virtual and augmented reality and the environment. He has published more than 350 peer-reviewed international scientific papers, along with 17 books exploring multidisciplinary research areas such as machine learning, telecommunication fraud detection, AI-based clinical decision-making, sensors, robotics and wearable intelligent devices. Alongside his own research, Dhiya has shared his expertise with students studying at LJMU's School of Computer Science and Mathematics, successfully

supervising over 25 PhD students, nurturing the next generation of researchers and fostering the growth of AI expertise within the academic community. He has also served as Associate Dean of External Engagement for the Faculty of Engineering and Technology and as a staff governor for the Board of Governors.



Dr Anand Verma

Founder & CEO, Expect AI, UK

Anand is a digital, AI and sustainability visionary, innovator and successful entrepreneur who has a deep understanding of the planet, people and technology needs. Holding over 27 years of professional experience in management consulting, digital and impactful businesses, he is passionate about creating positive change by humanising technology. In 2019, Anand made a commitment to fighting climate change issues and applying the power of design, data and AI to take actions. Anand is the Founder and CEO of ExpectAI and is committed to helping companies decarbonise, profitably with the power of big data and AI. Prior to his recent venture, Anand was the Founder and CEO of Brilliant Basics, an award-winning Global Design and Innovation company headquartered in London with studios all over the globe. He successfully sold his business to technology conglomerate Infosys in 2017 to accelerate their Design and Innovation business globally. Previously, Anand was one of the youngest Presidents and CEOs at Interpublic Group (IPG) leading Mediabrands Ventures and their digital and ventures (M&A) arm. Previous to this, Anand held senior leadership roles at Publicis Sapient. Additionally, Anand is the Chairman of an early-stage AI company Reimagine AI as well as advising on various startups and scale-ups in the impact space. In 2021, he received an honorary Doctorate in Computer Science from his alma mater for his services to design and technology. He has also received his Corporate Strategy and M&A accreditation from INSEAD.

Elena Sinel

Founder of Teens in AI, UK



Elena Sinel is an award-winning social entrepreneur and the visionary founder of Teens in AI, an internationally acclaimed initiative launched at the United Nation's AI for Good Global Summit in 2018. Recognised for her expertise in AI Literacy and AI Ethics, Elena is dedicated to equipping the next generation with skills to address complex global challenges. Her leadership in embedding AI education into broader societal frameworks has fostered partnerships with FTSE 100 companies and governments worldwide, promoting diverse perspectives in tech. Elena's work in AI draws upon her decade-long experience as a consultant in international development, where she focused on poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods across regions like Central Asia, the Balkans, and Ethiopia. Partnering with organisations such as the British Council, UNDP, and the World Bank, she developed impactful community solutions. Currently serving as a Microsoft Regional Director, Elena is recognised for her cross-platform expertise, thought leadership, and commitment to actionable outcomes. Her prior role on the Education Task Force of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Artificial Intelligence provided her with a platform to influence policy development for AI education, positioning her as a trusted advocate for a future-ready workforce.

Sarah El Battouty

Global Ambassador UN High-Level Climate Champions UNFCCC, Architect & Founder of ECONSult, Board of Governors at The National Council for Women, Egypt



Sarah is an architect and climate policy specialist with 22 years' experience in the sustainable design and development field. She is the founder of Egypt's leading Green Building Consultancy ECONSULT and an advisor to the Egyptian President since 2014. Sarah is the first architect to become A UNFCCC Global Ambassador with the High-Level Climate Champions. In 2025 she was elected to the Board of Governors for the Supreme Council of Women, where she is the head of the environmental and Climate Financing Committee. Nominated for the prestigious EarthShot Prize and recognised by His Majesty King Charles for her work in Commonwealth Development through her work in Rural Green Communities, Sarah is the recipient of the Vital Voices Award for Greater MENA and GreenTech Entrepreneur recipient for 2024. She founded Egypt's leading green building consultancy and multi-award winning ECONSult in 2013 which has the highest portfolio of green certified projects by a local architect, the first Carbon Neutral project in the region, and first Net Zero building and school. This year her work was shortlisted for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. She is also the founder of a scrap waste upcycling company MùBun which transforms the waste into high end furniture. She graduated from the University of Cambridge Architecture BA, MSC in Project Management & Climate Policy and Oxford University Transformative Leadership. She has a MSc in Sustainable Development Climate Policy and Rural Project Management from SOAS UK. Sarah is a Board Member of the American Chamber of Commerce Egypt and AUC Business School.

PILLAR II ACCESS TO FINANCE

Panel Financing Women-Led Climate Ventures

Session Chair



Nadine El Habbal

Founder & Director, Further Edge; Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Arabia Insurance Cooperative Co (AICC), UK

Nadine El Habbal is Co-Founder of Further Edge, a platform helping insurers, regulators, and global enterprises transform complex data into knowledge - fuelling smarter decisions, stronger compliance, and more resilient systems. With a career rooted in public service and entrepreneurship, Nadine brings a deep understanding of how regulatory innovation and data science can strengthen communities from the ground up. She served as Acting Head of Lebanon's Insurance Control Commission, where she championed reforms that safeguarded policyholders and introduced modern governance standards. Her leadership contributed to Lebanon's financial recovery following the 2019 economic collapse, proving that female-led institutions can drive national resilience even amid systemic crises. Now Vice Chairman of Arabia Insurance Cooperative Company, Nadine oversees strategic transformation, pricing innovation, and governance alignment. Her work at Further Edge is enabling insurers across the Middle East to implement IFRS 17 six times faster than traditional vendors - demonstrating that technology, led by women, can accelerate meaningful change. A Sloan Fellow at London Business School and a mother of three, Nadine is passionate about creating systems where women in leadership are catalysts for stability, trust, and inclusive progress. She believes resilient communities start with data-informed policy - and women at the table. Her belief: when women lead, and data is trusted, communities gain the tools to not just recover but thrive.

Session Speakers



Wedad Almarzooqi

Head of Sustainability, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, WiSER Pioneer

Wedad Almarzooqi serves as a Head of Sustainability at ADCB, where she is responsible for the group's sustainability strategy and drives sustainable finance initiatives. She oversees ADCB's reporting to key regulators like the Central Bank of the UAE and the Union Banking Federation, and she is responsible for forging impactful partnerships with government, investors and industry bodies. Her role also includes managing sustainability training for all staff, ensuring asset management and procurement practices are aligned with our ESG goals. Wedad also sits on the Abu Dhabi Corporate Social Responsibility Committee, is a WiSER Pioneer with Masdar, a certified non-executive director with the Financial Times and a member of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. With a decade of prior experience in aviation, Wedad brings a unique perspective to advancing impactful,

sustainable growth in banking. She is an advocate of youth and women initiatives in her community.



May Al Karooni

CEO and Founder of Globechain, UK

May Al-Karooni has previously worked in the investment banking and asset management industry, raising funds for venture capital, property, and hedge funds over the last 10 years, totalling over £120 million. In 2015, May set up Globechain after seeing a demand for a new solution for waste management. During an office relocation at an investment bank where she worked, she witnessed thousands of items in good condition being discarded that could have been given to nonprofits in need. However, as there was no easy solution, they ended up in landfills. With this vision, she created her first website with only £800 to become commercial with a conscience. Globechain is the largest ESG Reuse Marketplace. It connects enterprises to non-profits, individuals, and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMES) to redistribute unneeded items, generating ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) data for its members. Globechain provides three solutions: external reuse, internal reuse, and loaning. It focuses on the construction, real estate, retail, hospitality, and medical sectors. It has over 10,000 members and operates in the UK, Spain, New York and Texas. Globechain has diverted over 70,200,000 kilograms from landfills, with items being redistributed within the UK and abroad to Sierra Leone, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, and Ukraine, providing savings of over £350,000,000 for charitable causes. To date, May has garnered recognition in esteemed publications such as Inspiring Fifty UK, Cranfield University (FTSE 350) - Women to Watch, Forbes Next 1000 USA, and Forbes 100 Leading UK Environmentalists.



Constance Chalchat

Chief Sustainability Officer, CIB and Global Markets, BNP Paribas, UK

Constance Chalchat is the Chief Sustainability Officer of BNP Paribas Corporate & Institutional Banking (CIB) & Global Markets, and is a member of the BNP Paribas CIB Board. As sustainability is at the core of BNP Paribas' strategy, Constance main missions are to nurture, transform and grow BNP Paribas sustainability franchise across the Corporate and Institutional businesses in order to create long term value for CIB clients and businesses. Additionally, in her role as Chief Sustainability Officer for Global Markets, a world leader in Sustainable finance, Constance is strengthening the sustainability culture and fostering data driven global markets and capital markets sustainable and profitable solutions for our clients and partners, incorporating sustainable considerations in analysis, modelling and decision making. Since joining BNP Paribas in 2001, Constance has held various management positions in Transformation, Digital, Analytics, AI and Sustainable Development. Constance holds an MBA in Finance from HEC Paris business school and certifications from the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.



Sophia Swire

Founder & CEO, GEDI (Gender Equity Diversity Investments Ltd), UK

Sophia Swire is an impact-focused venture capitalist and philanthropist. Her work bridges finance and development, East and West, and public and private sectors. With over 30 years of experience catalysing women's education, economic empowerment and enterprise development across frontier and emerging markets, she is recognised as a pioneer in women-led private sector development. Sophia began her career at Britain's largest investment bank, Kleinwort Benson, before launching social ventures focused on job creation with a focus on women and girls. She launched the international fashion for pashmina shawls which created livelihoods for over 100,000 women artisans leading to an increase of 4,000% in exports from Nepal. As founder of Future Brilliance, Sophia trained hundreds of women in vocational and enterprise skills, working in complex post-conflict environments. Her work - for which she has been recognised with several awards, including at the United Nations, has earned the trust and endorsement of local and national governments in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Over the past decade, Sophia has been an active angel investor, backing female-led, tech-enabled, startups globally, including in the MENA region. Together with leading Arab women fund managers and investors, she has now founded GEDI, a venture capital fund, in formation, designed to unlock capital and network support for talented Arab female startup founders across MENA, working at the intersection of AI, climate and sustainability.

Panel Bridging the Financing Gap for Women-Led Climate Enterprises

Session Chair



Dana Kupova

Head of Inclusive Financial Systems, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), UK

Dana Kupova, Head of Inclusive Financial Systems at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), has 20 years of experience in defining and executing ESG strategies across sectors, financial instruments, and geographies, with focus on emerging markets. Her experience spans climate, gender, and inclusion ESG topics, in corporate as well as financial institutions sector. Dana also holds the position of a Board Director in the Green for Growth Fund. Ms Kupova holds an Executive Global MBA from Manchester Business School and is a proud alumni of the European Women on Boards.

Session Speakers



Michael Liebreich

Managing Partner, EcoPragma Capital; Chairman & CEO, Liebreich Associates

Michael Liebreich (pronounced Lee-Bryke) is an acknowledged speaker and thought leader on clean energy, mobility, technology, climate, sustainability and finance. He is Co-Managing Partner of EcoPragma Capital, a Growth Equity investor, investing in companies on the cusp of strong commercial growth and contributing to the net-zero transition and CEO of Liebreich Associates. Michael is also most significantly known as the Founder and a Senior Contributor to BloombergNEF. In July 2020, during the first UK COVID lockdown, Michael started 'Cleaning Up – Leadership in an Age of Climate Change', a podcast and YouTube channel where once a week he has an informational, inspiring and fun conversation with a leader from the worlds of clean energy, mobility, climate finance or sustainable development. Michael is an honorary fellow of the Energy Institute, a visiting professor at Imperial College London and a senior advisor to Sustainable Development Capital LLP (SDCL). In June 2019 Michael was honoured to accept an invitation to join the IEA's Global Commission for Urgent Action on Energy Efficiency, a newly formed independent panel focusing on key policy actions that can be undertaken by countries around the globe. Some of his former roles include member of the UK's Taskforce on Energy Efficiency, chairing the subgroup on industry and an advisor to the UK Board of Trade, an advisor to the UN on Sustainable Energy for All, and a member of the board of Transport for London. Michael serves on too many advisory boards to list, he is a prolific speaker and writer, and is known to make the occasional angel investment. His ongoing

philanthropic work is admirable. Michael skied for Great Britain at the 1992 Albertville Olympics.

Maxine Chehab

Senior Investment Manager, Germany



Maxine Chehab is a senior investment and strategy professional with over 15 years of experience leading cross-border transactions across emerging and frontier markets. Her work focuses on mobilising capital for sustainable infrastructure, energy transition, and climate resilience initiatives. Maxine has structured and managed more than \$1 billion in private market investments across sectors including renewable energy, water, logistics, and agri-infrastructure. She has worked closely with sovereign entities, development finance institutions (DFIs), and institutional investors to design blended-finance vehicles, co-financing frameworks, and long-term investment strategies aligned with national development goals. Her career spans roles across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, where she has successfully driven regional expansion, built local investment teams, and advised ministries and multilateral partners on capital deployment and policy alignment. Maxine holds an Executive MBA from the University of Cambridge. She speaks Arabic, English, French, and German, and is passionate about building bridges between capital and impact to support inclusive and resilient growth. She also serves in various advisory and voluntary roles promoting financial inclusion, women in leadership, and the scaling of climate-focused solutions across markets.



Dr Hanan Abuflasa

Assistant Professor of Renewable Energy at the Department of Physics, College of Science, University of Bahrain

Dr Hanan Abuflasa is an Assistant Professor specializing in Renewable Energy at the Department of Physics, College of Science, University of Bahrain. With a PhD and MSc in Renewable Energy from Loughborough University in the UK, she has established herself as a leading expert in sustainable energy solutions in Bahrain and the Gulf region. Dr Abuflasa recently served as Acting Director General of Energy Efficiency at the Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs (2023-2024) and previously chaired the Department of Physics at the University of Bahrain (2019-2023). Her extensive experience includes roles as a Renewable Energy Adviser for Bahrain's Sustainable Energy Unit and a post-doctoral fellowship at University College Dublin's Electricity Research Group. Internationally recognised for her expertise, she represents Bahrain in the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) for Solar and Wind Energy and served as the IEEE PES Region Representative for Europe, Middle East, and Africa in 2023. She led the University of Bahrain team to third place in the Solar Decathlon Middle East 2021 and has led several international research collaborations, including EU-GCC projects and partnerships with Oxford and Aston Universities. Currently, she is the University of Bahrain principal investigator in the four-year EU Horizon2020 project. Her research covers renewable energy integration, desalination technologies, and energy efficiency. She has over 25 published papers and book chapters. In 2022, the United Nations Women designated her the most prominent scientist in Bahrain in the fields of sustainability, environment and renewable energy.



Alexis McGivern

Head of Stakeholder Engagement, Oxford Net Zero, Oxford University, UK

Alexis McGivern is Head of Stakeholder Engagement and a Research Fellow at Oxford Net Zero, where she translates research into action to promote credible, justice-aligned net zero strategies. Her work focuses on the governance of corporate net zero commitments, advancing high-integrity guidance through voluntary initiatives and standards. A key area of Alexis' work involves revising net zero standards for professional services providers, specifically encouraging a shift from purely operational emissions towards the emissions of their clients that have been enabled by the strategic advice of PSPs. Alexis co-created and co-leads the Global Youth Climate Training Programme, which has equipped more than 5,000 young climate activists with a deep understanding of the UNFCCC negotiations. Alexis is a member of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol's Technical Working Group, contributing to the first revision of the Corporate Standard in two decades. In addition, she co-leads the Oxford Sustainable Business Programme, an executive education initiative designed to empower sustainability leaders. Prior to her current role, she worked at the International Union for Conservation of Nature on marine biodiversity conservation.

PILLAR III POLICY & LEADERSHIP

Panel How Local Solutions Can Feed into Broader Policy

Session Chair



Dina Saleh

Managing Director and Chief of Staff, Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy

Session Speakers



Hajar Al Ketbi

Director of Government Communication, Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, UAE

Hajar Bakhit Alketbi is a trailblazing Emirati leader in communications and marketing, with 19 years of experience shaping narratives across global, regional, public, and private sector landscapes. As Director of Government Communications at the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE), she led the National Sustainability Communication Plan for COP28, positioning the UAE as a global champion for climate action — an achievement that earned her two prestigious GLOBE Awards for Excellence in Communication in 2024. Throughout her career, Alketbi has been at the forefront of strategic communication transformation. At Dubai Municipality, she revitalized the organization's image and drove large-scale PR and CSR initiatives aligned with Dubai's future vision. Before that, at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), she led international communications efforts that helped secure DIFC's place as the leading financial center in MEASA and among the top ten globally. Her journey began with a decade of regional marketing leadership for luxury fashion house Carolina Herrera under Chalhoub Group, where she consistently achieved market-leading results. Beyond her professional roles, Alketbi is a passionate mentor and speaker, supporting startups through global programs including the UN Women Program, MISK Accelerator, and Startupbootcamp.



Professor Hayat Sindi

Founder & CEO of 'iQ' Institute for Quality; Goodwill Ambassador for STEM at UNESCO; Honorary Fellow at Newnham College, University of Cambridge, UK

Dr Hayat Sindi is a Saudi medical scientist with a focus on medical testing and biotechnology. She holds nine patents for a machine that combines the effects of light and ultra-sound for use in biotechnology in early detection of breast cancer. Dr Sindi graduated from King's College London in Pharmacology in 1995 and was the first woman from the Gulf region to obtain a PhD in biotechnology from the University of Cambridge, Newnham College. Dr Sindi co-founded and led a non-profit organization 'Diagnostics For All' – a program to create affordable diagnostic devices for millions of people in impoverished regions. In 2008, she led the 'Diagnostics For All' business team to first place in Harvard Business School's Business Plan Contest, in the social enterprise track, and also to first place in MIT's \$100K Entrepreneurship Competition in the same year. In 2011 Dr Sindi launched 'i2 Institute for Imagination and Ingenuity'. She was named an Emerging Explorer by National Geographic in 2012, and in 2014, she received the Clinton Global Citizen Award for "Leadership in Civil Society", in recognition of her work in encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship among young people. Dr Sindi was appointed in 2013 among the first 30 women to sit in the Shura Council, Saudi Arabia's consultative assembly. In 2017, Dr Sindi was appointed as Senior Scientific Advisor to the President of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and in 2018, she contributed to the launch of IsDB's \$500m Transform Fund and Engage platform. Dr Sindi was voted one of the BBC's top 100 Women in 2018, and in 2019, the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) exceptionally awarded her one of the "TWAS Medal Lectures" in recognition of her achievements in biotechnology and her leading, inspirational role as a woman scientist putting innovation to the service of the developing world and promoting science education. Dr Sindi is a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for her efforts to promote science education in the Middle East especially for girls, and recently launched her global consulting firm, The Institute for Quality (iQ).



Lamé Verre

Co-founder & Chair Advisory Board, Lean In Equity & Sustainability, UK

Lamé Verre is an award-winning Energy Executive and Co-founder of Lean In Equity & Sustainability (LiNES), an independent global gender diversity and inclusion social impact organisation. Lamé has had a remarkable international career spanning over 25 years as an Economist with blue chip companies working across the energy value chain in different geographies. With a wealth of knowledge and experience in the energy transition and decarbonisation, Lamé actively contributes to Boards and Committees, shaping policies that drive green growth and sustainable practices. Lamé Verre has traversed the industry value chain in multiple geographies, including the UK, other parts of Europe, the US, and Sub-Saharan Africa, providing a solid foundation of expertise and reassurance to her audience. As part of the leadership teams and member of several committees and boards, her roles is pivotal in advocating for sustainability and innovation,

ensuring that corporate strategies align with global environmental standards and societal expectations. Overall, Lamé focuses on advocacy and identifying investment opportunities to bridge the energy and equity gap in emerging markets.



Camilla Melis

MTE Climate Ambassador - World Bank Group; former Advisor to the G7 Italian Presidency; G20 EU Youth Delegate; WiSER Pioneer

Camilla Melis is an Italian policy professional committed to advancing climate action and sustainable development through multilateral cooperation and inclusive leadership. She has served as an Advisor to the Italian G7 Presidency at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and previously supported Trade and Sustainable Development initiatives at the European Commission in Brussels. As a current Max Thabiso Edkins Climate Ambassador by the World Bank Group and G20 Youth Delegate representing the European Union, Camilla fosters strategic dialogue on socio-economic development agendas, with a focus on the Mediterranean region through her advocacy work for the Mediterranean Youth Council. Supporting women's entrepreneurship, she is a 2025 WiSER Pioneer, bringing international experience and contributing to high-level forums including COP29, G7/ G20 Ministerials, and the FAO World Food Forum. Her work bridges global policy frameworks with regional implementation, driving meaningful project and policy actions through strategic partnerships and inclusive governance approaches. Camilla speaks Italian, English, and Spanish, with proficiency in French and Portuguese.

Panel Empowering Next-Generation Sustainability Leaders

Session Chair



Dr Christelle Comair

Head of Women's Research Centre, Royal University for Women, Bahrain

Dr Christelle Comair is the Head of the Women's Research Centre at the Royal University for Women (RUW) in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and Assistant Professor at the College of Business and Law. She holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Paris, a Master's degree from SciencesPo Paris, and a Bachelor's degree from the American University of Beirut. An accomplished academic, researcher, and policy advisor, Dr. Comair has been a Research Fellow with the Women and Public Policy Program at the Harvard Kennedy School, and recipient of research awards in international relations. She has taught courses in international relations, women's studies, conflict-resolution, leadership and economics. With extensive experience as a technical advisor across the Arab region, the EU and the US, she has worked with renowned research institutes, international organizations, and civil society associations to drive impactful change in women's economic, social, and political participation. Dr Comair has designed and led national and regional research projects, influencing policymaking and fostering international collaboration for sustainable development.

Session Speakers



Fatma Behzad Afghan

Drainage Systems Projects Engineer, Sewerage and Recyclewater Projects, WiSER Pioneer, UAE

Fatma Behzad Afghan is a Design Engineer at Dubai Municipality, where she plays a pivotal role in shaping the emirate's drainage infrastructure. With a robust background spanning both private consultancy and government sectors, Fatma offers a comprehensive perspective on urban development, blending technical expertise with strategic vision, aligning her field with Dubai's 2040 Urban Masterplan and the UAE Water Security Strategy 2036. Her work has been instrumental in integrating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) into infrastructure planning, as well as advancing digital transformation through Digital Twin applications to optimize infrastructure asset management and urban resilience. Fatma also contributes to research in sustainable urban development, publishing on topics like lifecycle costing, climate adaptation, and sustainable materials, including geopolymers concrete and green building practices. Her research continues to inform her work at Dubai Municipality, where she applies these findings to real-world projects. Beyond engineering, Fatma serves as President of the Dubai Municipality Youth Council, championing youth engagement and professional mentorship. She

is also active in environmental volunteerism, participating in hike and ocean clean-ups and contributing globally as a UN Volunteer. Fatma's multifaceted career reflects her dedication to sustainable infrastructure, climate resilience, youth empowerment, and impactful sustainable change in her community and beyond.



Gihan Hyde

CEO, CommUnique, UK

Gihan is the award-winning CEO & Founder of CommUnique, one of the UK's fastest-growing ESG Strategy and Communications Advisory Firms. CommUnique is B.Corp certified. She is the recipient of the UK's 'CEO of the Year' award by CEO Magazine, recipient of 'The top female leaders in the UK to watch' award from the CIO Magazine, and one of the most influential '40 over 40' communications professionals in the world according to Campaign Magazine and is LinkedIn Top ESG Voice 2023. In addition to founding CommUnique Gihan serves as the Associate Lecturer for Oxford University's 'Sustainable Corporations' Online Course, lead course designer and instructor for Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and the Sustainability mentor for Accenture's Fintech Innovation Lab, and LinkedIn Top Green Voice 2024. Prior to founding CommUnique, Gihan led some of the largest ESG diversity and employee change communications departments including BP Workplace Sustainability, Barclays Internal audit, HSBC Asset Management, M&S HR, and the Riyadh Metro Project. Her work impacted more than 150,000 employees, and 200,000 customers and closed \$300m worth of sales deals.



Dr Souad Mohamed

Strategic Advisor on Leadership Development and Women's Advancement (UK, MENA, Africa); Senior Visiting Fellow and Programme for Africa Leadership Faculty, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), UK; CEO, IEL International, UK; Advisory Council Member, Harvard Business Review, UK

Dr Souad Mohamed is a Strategic Advisor and Senior Expert in leadership development and gender equity across the UK, Middle East, and Africa. She is Senior Visiting Fellow and a key contributor to the Programme for Africa Leadership at the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She is also the CEO of IEL International, leading high-impact initiatives across the public and private sectors. With a career spanning executive leadership roles (CEO, Chief Development Officer, Chairperson of Trustees, Board Advisor, and Programme Leader) Dr. Mohamed has shaped national strategies and led transformative leadership development agendas across sectors. She is a member of the Harvard Business Review Advisory Council and works at the intersection of research, policy, and practice to build inclusive, future-ready leadership. Her portfolio includes the design and delivery of multi-stakeholder, cross-sector partnerships with governments, NGOs, INGOs, and leading universities, offering sustainable and evidence-based solutions with measurable regional and global impact. Her work is grounded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5: Gender Equality, and is widely recognised for advancing women's leadership and empowering next-generation leaders.



Amina Sundby Merkebawi

Sustainable Development Specialist & Senior Manager of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation, TAG International, Board Member, Kantar Advisory Partners, UK

Amina Sundby Merkebawi is a climate and development specialist with a decade of hands-on experience shaping climate adaptation, green transition, and resilience programmes in some of the world's most challenging contexts. In her current role as Senior Manager for Climate Adaptation & Mitigation at TAG International, Amina leads the design and delivery of climate resilience initiatives for governments, donors, and multilateral agencies. She thrives on translating technical expertise into donor-funded programmes that address the intersection of climate risk, fragility, and sustainable development. Previously, Amina developed UNICEF Lebanon's first Youth Climate Change Strategy, advanced just transition and green jobs strategies for the International Labour Organization, and scaled climate tech operations in the private sector. She is known for building partnerships that bridge policy, innovation, and community priorities, whether it's piloting nature-based solutions, supporting green start-ups, or advising on climate finance. Amina holds an MSc from King's College London and a BA from the University of Agder. She is committed to driving inclusive, locally led solutions that empower communities and deliver lasting impact where it's needed most.

Fireside Chat Women-Led Governance in Climate

Session Chair



Kate Hampton OBE

Chief Executive Officer, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), UK

Kate became CEO of the Children's Investment Fund Foundation in March 2016, having run CIFF's Climate Change team since 2009. Current voluntary board and advisory roles include the Observer Research Foundation (India), the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED), and the We Protect Global Alliance. Kate is also chair of the European Climate Foundation. Previously she has served on the advisory committees for the presidents of COP28, COP26, and the inaugural Africa Climate Summit. Prior to CIFF, Kate's career spanned roles in government, finance, consulting, a think tank and NGOs, including at Climate Change Capital, where she was Head of Policy. She has also advised policy makers in several roles, including as Senior Policy Advisor for the United Kingdom's G8 and EU presidencies in 2005 and as a sherpa to the EU High Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment in 2008. She has received multiple awards for her work, including a First Class Order of Zayed II (UAE), a Friendship Award (China) in 2024, and an OBE (UK) in 2023. In 2008, Kate was named a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader.

Session Speakers



Her Excellency Dr Nawal Al-Hosany

Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, UAE



Mercedes Vela Monserrate

Chief Executive Officer, Global Climate Finance Center (GCFC), UAE

Mercedes Vela Monserrate is the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Climate Finance Centre (GCFC), where she leads efforts to accelerate private capital into climate solutions and enable systemic transformation across global financial markets. Prior to this, Mercedes headed Finance Sector Partnerships at COP28, where she played a key role in shaping the international climate finance agenda. She also served as Head of Sustainable Finance at Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), developing regulatory frameworks and driving initiatives to scale sustainable finance in the MENA region. Mercedes has held senior positions at Morgan Stanley, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and the European Parliament, consistently advancing sustainability priorities within the financial services sector. Her experience spans financial regulation, policymaking, and private sector engagement, with a focus on aligning finance with climate objectives. She holds a BSc from Maastricht University and is widely recognised for her leadership, strategic insight, and dedication to mobilising capital for impactful climate action in both developed and emerging markets.

AIWF Acknowledgements



The AIWF President & Founder **Haifa Al Kaylani OBE**, the Chair of the AIWF Executive Committee **Mona Al Moayyed**, and the AIWF Board together extend our warmest thanks and appreciation to WiSER and to **Dr Lamya Fawwaz** for their valued partnership on this important initiative. We also wish to thank the Royal Academy of Engineering leadership and Fellows for hosting us on this special occasion.

We are grateful to all our distinguished Opening Session Keynote speakers for so generously supporting our conference with their presence and shared insights, and to our esteemed panel chairs and speakers representing some of the world's most forward-looking, innovative and action-oriented non-profit organisations, private sector corporations, international institutions, higher education institutions, and civil society members – among them, The World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD), the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, Bloomberg, Expect AI, Teens in AI, Arania Insurance, Globe Chain, Oxford Net Zero, Elite Agritech, Crop Trust, Liverpool John Moores University, the University of Bahrain, the London School of Economics, the London School of Social Enterprise & Sustainable Economics, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation and the Global Climate Finance Centre, among many others, among many others.

We take this opportunity to share our appreciation for the support of our valued Board Members, many of whom are present with us today having travelled from Europe and the MENA region. We also take this moment to pay tribute to our Founder Board Member the late **Sylvia Perry**, who sadly passed away in April 2025 and who supported AIWF with dedication and diligence for over 20 years. We acknowledge with great appreciation the AIWF Global Benefactor Partner PepsiCo and our Global Corporate Partners – PwC, Pfizer, Arabia Insurance and YK Al Moayyed & Sons – for their generous support of AIWF's global advocacy and annual programmes and for leading the way in driving gender diversity within their respective sectors in the MENA region and around the world.

We express our thanks to our institutional partners here with us today including WiSER based in Abu Dhabi and the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce based in London for all invaluable support with the outreach for today's conference. And of course we are all appreciative of our AIWF members and guests, Young Arab Women Leaders alumni, the WiSER Pioneers and all our valued delegates who have joined us from across the UK, EU and the Arab world, many coming especially from the UAE, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia and many other MENA states.

We look forward to sharing today's key outcomes and action points in a report to be published jointly by AIWF and WiSER later in 2025. We trust that we will all benefit from our shared exchange of ideas, culture, and insight on this very special day fostering new opportunities and partnerships for growth and action in climate, sustainability and STEM.

About AIWF



AIWF was founded in London in 2001 by **Haifa Al Kaylani OBE** as a non-profit development organisation with the clear mandate of supporting and enhancing the role of women and young people in the social and economic development of their countries and across the Middle East region. In just over two decades, AIWF has become an internationally renowned advocacy platform for inclusive growth, empowerment and sustainability for women's and youth leadership, empowerment and innovation in the MENA region and internationally.

Headquartered in London, in all our Arab and global programmes we are exceptionally proud to bring partners in all spheres together to build bridges and facilitate business links, cross-border collaboration and experience exchange to build the capacity of Arab women at every level and in every sector whilst addressing critical development challenges for women and young people in the region beyond. AIWF, as an NGO Member of the UN Global Compact, works with governmental and non-governmental partners such as the League of Arab States, the European Commission and European Parliament, UN organisations and agencies, the World Bank, the MENA-OECD Investment Programme, and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to produce flagship reports, policy recommendations and strategies that inform priorities in the region, business strategies and the development of diversity in the MENA workplace, and cultural shifts in the region to advance and support inclusive and equitable growth for women and youth in the MENA and global economy.

AIWF has collaborated extensively with the City of London Corporation, the Greater Paris Investment Authority, the Dubai International Financial Centre, the EastWest Institute, the Women's Leadership Board at Harvard, the International Bar Association, UN agencies, NGOs, academic, economic and trade institutions. AIWF also partners with International Chambers of Commerce, UK, US and Arab business councils, entrepreneurs, SME networks, incubation centres, multinationals active in the MENA region and global corporations to promote initiatives and build the relationships that will help create private sector jobs needed in the region.

AIWF proactively links partners in academia with partners in industry and the private sector to address the skills mismatch in the region and integrate entrepreneurship and sustainability education into mainstream curricula. Since inception, AIWF has partnered with some of the world's leading universities and regional institutes of learning to support opportunities for Arab women in higher education, with a focus on STEM, business and entrepreneurship. All AIWF academic partners promote the empowerment of women as an economic imperative and are advocates for entrepreneurship training and sustainability education to become a core part of the business and management syllabus in the region. AIWF is also very proud to offer internships to talented female students, routinely assists universities with research projects and always invites students to attend conferences and participate in its initiatives.

For further information on AIWF's global advocacy, annual programmes, Board and membership, please visit aiwfonline.com.

About WiSER

WOMEN IN SUSTAINABILITY,
ENVIRONMENT AND
RENEWABLE ENERGY



Women in Sustainability, Environment and Renewable Energy (WiSER) is a global platform dedicated to empowering women as leaders of sustainable change. Launched in 2015 by Masdar and the Zayed Sustainability Prize, WiSER reflects the UAE's enduring commitment to gender equity and the vision of its founding father, **Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan**.

WiSER supports women through year-long initiatives focused on education, engagement and empowerment—providing leadership training, sustainability knowledge, and opportunities to connect with global decision-makers. With women making up less than 25% of the global workforce in key sustainability sectors, WiSER works to close this gap by equipping women with the skills, confidence and platforms to lead.

Its flagship WiSER Pioneers Program has supported over 150 emerging female leaders from more than 30 countries, while the WiSER Mentorship Program has delivered over 470 hours of one-on-one guidance to help young women grow as changemakers.

WiSER also drives thought leadership through its Annual Forum, which convenes more than 4,000 global influencers each year, alongside ongoing initiatives such as the WiSER Wisdom Series and research papers tackling critical topics from energy access to the intersection of AI and gender equality.

As WiSER celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2025, it remains committed to increasing the participation of women in sustainability and creating lasting impact through its core pillars of education, engagement and empowerment.

For further information on WiSER please visit: <https://masdar.ae/en/strategic-global-initiatives/wiser>

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