



## **Arab International Women's Forum in Paris**

*Introducing Arab Business Women to Investment Opportunities in France*

**Dubai, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009:** The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) gathered for its annual meeting in Paris on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2009 at the invitation of Madame Christine Lagarde, the French Minister for Economy Industry and Employment and was hosted by the Greater Paris Investment Agency.

The conference was attended by a number of influential women in the fields of business and politics, representing delegations from 25 countries including 16 Arab nations. Among the Guest Speakers were five Arab women Ministers: HE MS Fayza Mohamed Aboulnaga, Minister of International Cooperation, The Arab Republic of Egypt; HE Suhair Al Ali. Minister of Planning & International Cooperation, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; HE Dr Fatima Al Balooshi, Minister for Social Development, Kingdom of Bahrain; HE Mrs Bahia Hariri, Minister of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon; HE Dr Diala Al-Haj Aref, Minister of Social Affairs & Labour, Syria.

The other eminent Guest Speakers included Sheikha Hanadi Nasser Bin Khaled Al Thani, Founder and Chairperson AMWAL, Qatar; HRH Princess Masha'el Bint Faisal Bin Turki Abdul-Aziz, President of the Board of Business Women Forum in the Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia; Mrs Raja Al Gurg, Managing Director, Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group, United Arab Emirates; Mrs Mona Almoayyed, Managing Director, Y J Almoayyed & Sons BSC, Bahrain; Mrs Hosna Rachid, Chairperson Rachid Mashreq Group, Egypt and Mrs Neveen El Tahri, Chairperson Delta Holdings and Country Representative of RBS in Egypt.

The AIWF was led by Founder and Chairman Haifa Al Kaylani, recognised as a high-impact change agent focusing on leadership in cultural and gender issues, encouraging greater cultural understanding between Arab and international communities, and supporting a strong role for women in that process.

Entitled "**From Partnership to Prosperity: Women in the Arab World, France and the International Community**" the conference, the first ever in France, provided a unique opportunity to bridge Arab and French business communities and to highlight the success and progress of Arab women in different parts of the world.

The conference included debates with field experts on a range of topics including Islamic finance, asset management, private sector growth, the Paris marketplace, corporate real estate, research and innovation and competitiveness clusters. In endorsing the aim of the conference of moving "*From Partnership to Prosperity*" Minister Christine Lagarde stated "I would like to stress that the importance of your Forum goes beyond your role in the economy. You project a modern international image of the Arab woman."

The delegates were introduced to Paris as a world-class metropolis presenting excellent "business to business" opportunities for trade and investment partnerships. Major players in all sectors of business including science, education and property within the Greater Paris area interacted with the delegates arranging private visits for the showcasing of the quality products of well-known family owned businesses such as Hermes, Leonard, Mellerio and the Galeries Lafayette. A networking dinner at the Jacquemart André Museum emphasised the innovative concepts that underlined this very special event.

"Never has it been more crucial that we recognize and celebrate the importance of partnership in fostering international trade and with it economic growth, neither has there ever been a better time for the Arab International Women's Forum to introduce Arab business women to the growing impetus of trade and investment that France is advancing," concluded Haifa Al Kaylani.

Declared Thierry Jacquillat, Chairman of the Greater Paris Investment Agency: "I am very confident in the future for Greater Paris. The presence here in Paris of such a large number of outstanding businesswomen gathered by the AIWF is the symbol of the confidence they have in the French economy and of the attractiveness of the French Capital Region."

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**Note for the editors:**

**The Arab International Women's Forum stands unique as the first and only non-profit organization set up in London to link Arab business and professional women in the 22 Arab countries with each other and with their counterparts in the international community. AIWF is the voice of Arab women showcasing their development, breaking stereotypical images and creating greater public awareness of their success and prospects within an international context.**

**Launched in 2001, AIWF provides an important networking opportunity where women can build their knowledge, develop**

**their business and career potential and promote their respective organisations. It is through *Building Bridges, Building Business* that AIWF will best offer its members value-added service and contribute further to prosperity in our respective communities.**

**Greater Paris Investment Agency is a non – profit organization founded over fifteen years ago by the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Composed of more than one hundred major French and multinational companies, its main missions are to promote Greater Paris' major assets to foreign investors and to improve its existing attractiveness.**

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