

Signing Ceremony for Benefactor Memorandum of Understanding
between PepsiCo and Arab International Women's Forum

Speech by

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Introductory Remarks

Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure both personally and as Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum to be with you all in Dubai marking the special occasion of this Signing Ceremony.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks and appreciation to Mr Abdul – Latif, President of PepsiCo AMEA for his warm welcome and valued support.

It gives me great pleasure to add my warm welcome to you all this afternoon to this Special Occasion being held to confirm and celebrate with a Signing Ceremony, the unique new role and status of a Benefactor Partnership for PepsiCo AMEA with The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF).

It is a very special honour to have the presence of Her Excellency, H.E. Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi, the UAE Minister for Foreign Trade, not only in her esteemed official role but also as a valued Founder Board Member of the Arab International Women's Forum.

AIWF is indeed proud and greatly honoured that PepsiCo has accepted the invitation to enter into this enhanced key alliance, making a commitment that will strengthen our joint efforts to

encourage and promote diversity, build bridges of knowledge and understanding to effect positive change and sustainable progress for women, their communities and their families

The AIWF Purpose and Mission

The subjects of economic competitiveness, sustainable human development and the empowerment of women through partnership and innovation lie at the very heart of the mission and vision of the Arab International Women's Forum. Recognised for its connectivity, its international media outreach and the ability to bring together civil society organisations, the corporate sector and governments, AIWF has created an unparalleled forum for dialogue and growth.

AIWF places great strategic importance on the development of its global networks and the establishment of key alliances with global corporations across all sectors. These relationships provide the linking of marketing and governance strategies with education and skills training programmes directed towards Arab women and the showcasing of their corporate diversity and support for community development.

As a powerful advocate for the political and economic inclusion of women in the Arab world, AIWF mobilises action at the highest levels to promote and advance legislative rights for and the political participation of Arab women. The influential role of the Arab International Women's Forum is acknowledged by collaboration with many leading Arab and international organisations - among them, the League of Arab States, the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the Ministry for the Economy,

Industry and Employment, France, the World Bank, The Greater Paris Investment Agency, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Commission and the European Parliament. In addition, AIWF has other well - established cooperation with UN agencies, NGOs, academic and economic institutions such as the Hawkamah Institute of Corporate Governance, the Mudara Institute of Directors and through its partnership with the Arab British Chamber of Commerce, activity to promote trade between the UK and the Arab region.

The history of the PepsiCo /AIWF Partnership and the values we share.

The PepsiCo AMEA relationship with AIWF commenced soon after the AIWF inauguration and was evident at the very first AIWF conference held in London when we examined the *Windows of Opportunity Opening Wider in Business and Public Life for Women in the Arab world*. The early understanding we reached about our mutual strategic goals was formalised when PepsiCo became an AIWF Global Platinum Partner in 2004

AIWF recognised that despite the significant advances made in recent years, the inclusion of women in the economic process can be a fundamental catalyst for social and economic development and that solid partnerships in all spheres with legislators and other stakeholders was the way forward. PepsiCo has been steadfastly with us on that journey as we took our key message to the League of Arab States in Cairo, the European Parliament in Brussels, the Dubai International Financial Centre, the World Bank in Washington to academic and business centres such as Madrid University, and the Paris Greater Investment Agency at the Paris Chamber of Commerce and to the heart of UK business and government at the Mansion House, London and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to mention just a few collaborations.

The very strong cooperation and mutual support that PepsiCo and AIWF have developed over those years and through those experiences has developed out of our joint outlook and concern for

the future of the Arab region and a commitment to focus upon the issues within the business and community that will generate change and allow women to make valued contributions to the economy and society. AIWF owes much of its ability to develop, into the significant and influential organisation it has become, to the valuable support of its global partners, foremost amongst them PepsiCo.

The PepsiCo *Performance with Purpose*

I take this opportunity to commend PepsiCo for their foresight, recognition of social goals and philanthropy, principles that are encapsulated in ***Performance with Purpose***, a policy and mission derived from the belief that their business and financial success must go hand in hand with their social and environmental responsibilities. ***Performance with Purpose*** makes exceptional efforts and sponsors initiatives aimed at making an impact on improving society.

This approach to leave a positive imprint on society rests on their three chosen pillars of sustainability:

- human – products making a healthy choice for their customers
- environmental –minimising the environmental footprint with the goal of reaching a net neutral impact
- talent – creating a diverse and inclusive culture for employees to attract the world’s best people.

AIWF is proud to observe that many of the PepsiCo initiatives are in tandem with their own mission of cultivating talent, fostering educational and training initiatives and promoting cultural diversity and sustainable human development.

The PepsiCo Female Talent Development Project launched in the region in 2006 became the vehicle to recruit, retain, foster and

develop at all levels of the business and ensured women were better represented in the talent pool.

Saad – your personal and business commitment to education on a number of initiatives on a global and regional level is first class. It is very ably demonstrated by the excellent outcomes and extension of the Tomooh project by which 2000 students from Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt have financially benefited to be able to continue their studies and face a brighter and better future.

The New Status – what we hope to achieve

The newly created status of Benefactor will be at the very highest level of the present AIWF partnerships , bringing for PepsiCo, greater awareness and top level involvement and a vital role in supporting the AIWF work of *Building Bridges, Building Business*.

AIWF will be delighted to cooperate with PepsiCo in the creation of a PepsiCo Award for Women who excel in all fields and provide the expertise in managing such initiatives and also the opportunity for this to be handed out at an AIWF gala event. We anticipate that this Award would be a significant public indicator of PepsiCo's serious intent to identify the talent, endeavour and progress of women and to foster women's advancement to key roles in business and their achievement of top leadership positions.

Communication and recognition will be the bywords for the PepsiCo and AIWF increasing connectivity. Together, we will explore all communication opportunities and take full advantage of website, external and internal publications, event and media activities to develop awareness and deliver our messages of shared vision and joint goals.

In particular we will,

- Plan and agree in advance an annual timetable of joint activities aligned to the two organisations' mutual goals and strategic agenda for the particular year.

- Agree and update within the annual timetable the specific social and CSR issues on which we will develop an agreed strategy and undertake joint activities targeting female talent development

- Identify and explore links and influences within the AIWF partnership network by which other joint activities might be arranged.

- Facilitate by close cooperation and promote these activities by media roundtables at international conferences, press conferences, media interviews with key players and joint media statements on key issues which have been agreed.

Concluding remarks

Your Excellency and Distinguished Guests, these are just a few of the ideas that will form our valuable cooperation with PepsiCo over the next three years as we face together the challenges we have identified as the core work of this unique new partnership. I would again like to thank Saad Abdul – Latif for his inspiring and wide thinking leadership and his friendship and cooperation.

Together, we and our teams, will enhance and further these shared goals for igniting development and growth in the Arab world with the promotion of female advancement through business, public and social life being the catalyst for unlocking the full potential and opportunities within the region. .

We both believe that the best contribution to peace in the region and at large is to give prospects for employment and to foster entrepreneurship. Those with power carry the responsibility to act. This is our aim for the enhanced partnership.