



AIWF NEWS

Arab International Women's Forum

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As we commence our 2008 activities, it gives me great pleasure, as Chairman and on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Arab International Women's Forum, to extend to all our members, our valued global partners and supporters best wishes for success, happiness and peace in the year ahead.

Following on from the inspiring and successful AIWF 2007 Programme *Globalisation, Trade and Entrepreneurship*, there could be no better way for AIWF to start our 2008 Programme than with the significant highlight of the Downing Street Reception. It was a great honour for AIWF to be hosted by Mrs Sarah Brown, wife of the UK Prime Minister, for this unique occasion in recognition of the AIWF mission and achievements and to have our global partners and friends with us to share this very special evening.

The AIWF Dubai conference in December 2007 set even more demanding targets to which to aspire. We plan to reach out further, internationally to celebrate the way that the world is changing and how women are developing their strength and potential to meet these changes with confidence and competence.

Entitled *Partners for Change: Realizing the potential of Arab women in the private and public sectors*, the 2008 Programme will examine not only how to increase women's participation in business but how more women should be engaged in public life and government. Being conversant with motivating business profit, the language of running the economy and tackling stereotyping are features to be included in every aspiring woman's portfolio.

Women's development and progress must be part of the blueprint that has been drawn up by the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the promise of a better world and a better life for all its citizens by 2015. From achieving universal primary education, to promoting gender equality, improving health standards, ensuring environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development, women need to be involved and make a significant and informed contribution. There is a role for them in building the global infrastructure, developing open trading and financial systems that are non-discriminatory, growing small and large businesses to create jobs and the income needed to make the achievement of the MDGs a reality.

AIWF is poised to push this agenda forward and its advocacy and action for this initiative will take centre stage at the *Partners for Change: Realizing the potential of Arab women in the private and public sectors*, conference to be held on 23-24 June in Washington DC, USA hosted by, and in collaboration with the World Bank. Looking further ahead, the Programme will also encompass a conference in the Middle East later in the year fusing the links and completing the circle of cooperation. We look forward to your continued support and participation.

Haifa Al Kaylani
Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2008

PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

*Realizing the potential of Arab women
in the private and public sectors*

**AIWF Conference
23 - 24 June 2008**

**Hosted by the World Bank
in Washington DC, USA**

*For more information contact AIWF offices
email info@aiwfonline.com www.aiwfonline.com*

EVENTS SUPPORTED BY AIWF

7 - 8 April 2008

'Arab Responses to Global Challenges & Global Responses to Arab Challenges: Framing a Dynamic 21st Century Agenda'
The Evian Group at IMD Arab Region Meeting III,
Amman, Jordan

8 - 10 April 2008

12th Economist Government Roundtable
DRIVING THE GLOBAL AGENDA THROUGH 2020
Brainstorming with World Leaders
for Political & Economic Prosperity
Athens, Greece

21 - 23 April 2008

'The Tunisian Mother: Identity Modernity and Solidarity'
3rd General Congress of the Tunisian Mothers' Association
Under the High Patronage of His Excellency Zine El Abidine
BEN ALI, President of the Republic of Tunisia,
Tunis, Tunisia

MRS SARAH BROWN HOSTS AIWF AT 10 DOWNING STREET

A unique and very special occasion marked the start to the 2008 Programme on Tuesday 12 February 2008 when Mrs Sarah Brown, wife of the UK Prime Minister, hosted an Evening Reception at their official residence, 10 Downing Street, in recognition and honour of the Arab International Women's Forum.

Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman, was delighted to present to Mrs Brown, the Board and Members of AIWF, global partners and representatives of business, the corporate sector and leading Arab and international academic, economic and trade institutions from 21 countries. Also present were Baroness Vadera, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Competitiveness, Deregulation and British Business Council and Mrs Maggie Darling, wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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MRS SARAH BROWN HOSTS AIWF AT 10 DOWNING ST.

(Continued from Page 1)



Mrs Sarah Brown & Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani
at the Downing Street Reception

In her warm welcome Mrs Brown said "I want to congratulate the Arab International Women's Forum for raising public awareness of the need to bring more women into the economic life of the Arab region. The Forum's work has allowed women to exchange knowledge and experience, develop their business potential and to take up positions of responsibility in the public arena."

The 2007 Programme
Globalisation, Trade and

Entrepreneurship, through which the Forum promoted links between the Arab region, the UK and the international sector, has been particularly important in creating an environment for collaboration, giving women the support and encouragement needed to overcome remaining barriers and challenges to their full equality and opportunity."

Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani was pleased to acknowledge this accolade when she said "AIWF is proud to be recognised as an organisation that is at the forefront of effecting change, promoting the role and potential for women, which is vital for growth and stability and developing strategies that create jobs, catalyse economic development and foster social cohesion".

LEADING BUSINESS WOMEN: AIWF SUPPORTS FINANCIAL TIMES SPECIAL REPORT ON ARAB WORLD'S LEADING WOMEN IN BUSINESS

"The empowerment of women is at the forefront of the debate over the future of the Arab world."

Financial Times

The Arab International Women's Forum was proud to have lent its support to the Financial Times in their initiative to recognise twenty five of the Arab world's leading businesswomen in a June 2007 Special Report, the first in the FT special reports to have featured Arab business women.

The Special Report, *Leading Businesswomen*, compiled by the distinguished FT Middle East editor, Roula Khalaf, was not designed as a guide to the most powerful or influential regional businesswomen; rather, its aim was to tell the story of emerging role models on the business scene. Among the businesswomen featured was **Reem Badran**, CEO of Kuwaiti Jordanian Holding Company, with a capital of \$122million; **Sheikha Al Bahar**, one of the region's most prominent bankers; **Maha Al Ghunaim**, one of the true female entrepreneurs of the Gulf, founder of Global Investment House, one of the region's best respected investment banks; **Lubna Olayan**, one of the most influential women in the Middle East and CEO of Olayan Financing Company, the Saudi arm of one of the kingdom's largest and oldest family conglomerates; **Nahed Taher**, CEO of Gulf One Investment Bank; **Neveen El Taheri**, Chair of the Delta Group of Companies in Egypt; and **Sheikha Hanadi Al Thani**, Managing Director of Qatari investment bank Amwal and AIWF Board Member.

The Arab International Women's Forum looks forward to ongoing collaboration with the FT on all matters of common interest in the future.

THE CHAIRMAN REVIEWS 2007

2007 was a busy and successful year for AIWF. The 2007 Programme, **Globalisation, Trade and Entrepreneurship**, commenced with a Roundtable meeting at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK in January to review and to discuss the impact, progress and implementation of the AIWF 2005 Programme Report and Recommendations. The outcome report **Women as Engines of Economic Growth – Moving Forward** was launched at the AIWF Dubai conference in December. This report is available for download on the AIWF website.

Two outstanding events marked the official launch of the 2007 theme in March – a Dinner at Mansion House in the City of London, at the kind invitation of the Lord Mayor, Alderman John Stuttard on 7 March, and a conference **Women's Entrepreneurship as a Driver for Growth and Stability** to mark International Women's Day on 8 March, hosted by DLA Piper UK. Detailed reports and photographs of these two high profile events appeared in the Special Report newsletter published in June 2007.

In June, AIWF and Merrill Lynch held a seminar on Women in Banking and Finance in Dubai, to celebrate our new Global Partnership. The programme included a panel discussion on **Women in Banking and Finance** that explored the role of business women in the Arab region, and an overview of global markets and investment banking strategies and is fully reported in this issue.

June also saw AIWF collaborate with the Financial Times on the production of a Special Report on the Arab world's leading women in business.

Throughout the year, I and other AIWF members represented AIWF at a number of international conferences and meetings. AIWF lent its support and partnership to significant and timely events over the year, such as the Global Summit of Women (Berlin), The Regional Conference on The Arab International Maritime Women in MENA and Africa (Alexandria, Egypt), The Forbes CEO Middle East Forum (Doha, Qatar), the 10th Global Leadership Forum of Women's International Networking (Oslo),

The Economist Roundtable (Athens, Greece), The Evian Group (Switzerland), the Arab Business Council for the World Economic Forum (Cairo), the Tawteen Symposium on Learning and Social Issues (Abu Dhabi), The New Arab Woman – A Forum of Leadership & Social Responsibility (Dubai), Women in Business Management & Investment (Damascus), Luxuria 2007, and the MENA-OECD Women Business Leaders Forum (Cairo).

2007, with its overall theme of **Globalisation, Trade and Entrepreneurship**, ended on a high note with the AIWF Conference **Powering the Future: Arab Business Women in a Modern Economy** on 10 & 11 December held, at the Dubai International Financial Centre at the kind invitation of the Governor, HE Dr Omar Bin Sulaiman, and under the Patronage of HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, Wife of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE, Ruler of Dubai.

Taking place in tandem with and as highlights the conference were two other significant events. On 10 December, **Domains of Influence: Arab Women Business Leaders in a New Economy**, the AIWF book featuring 36 leading Arab business women and their achievements. On 11 December, as Chairman of AIWF, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dr Nasser Saidi, Executive Director of Hawkamah to enable both organisations to advocate corporate sector reform and strengthen corporate governance for women entrepreneurs and their businesses in the MENA region. Fuller details of the Dubai events appear in the pages of this newsletter and also can be found on www.aiwfonline.com

AIWF remains most appreciative of the tremendous support that our Global Annual Partners, PepsiCo, Shell, DLA Piper, GM, IBM and PricewaterhouseCoopers have provided throughout the year. We would also like to acknowledge the keen support of Merrill Lynch, welcomed as a new Global Annual Partner in May 2007.

Haifa Al Kaylani
AIWF Chairman

OUTCOME REPORT OF AIWF ROUNDTABLE PUBLISHED AT DUBAI CONFERENCE

The AIWF Dubai Conference, the culmination of the AIWF 2007 Programme, was also the platform for launching the outcomes document of the first event in 2007, a Roundtable review of the AIWF 2005 Programme Report & Recommendations, hosted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), UK on 25 January.

Entitled *Women as Engines of Economic Growth in the Arab World—Moving Forward*, this publication set out the achievements and perspectives of the review of the AIWF 2005 Programme Report and Recommendations, with the impact and the advocacy for further action being identified. Jacqueline Perkins, Regional Adviser for the FCO in Bahrain was there to receive the first copy.

Key partners, stakeholders and other contributors participating in the Roundtable had reviewed and discussed the impact of the 2005 Report & Recommendations. Leading the debate, making valuable presentations and presenting evidence of the extent to which the recommendations had been implemented by stakeholders, were the panel of guest speakers – **Dominique Dellicour**, Head of Unit, Governance, Human Rights, Democracy and Gender at EuropeAid, the European Commission; **Nadereh Chamlou**, Senior Advisor, MENA, The World Bank; and **Wendy Papworth**, Pan European Diversity, Gender Programme Manager, IBM.

Recommendations and interventions to help secure Arab women's economic security were proposed and these included:

- Continued importance of, and the ability of Arab women to access IT
- Enabling educational environment to be built for less educated women in reach at local level
- Change and outcome of change to be celebrated
- Importance of the interface between the political, institutional and business spheres should be recognised
- Role of conflict in the region and its impact on women's economic progress should be explored more deeply

The full findings of the Roundtable, made available in the publication launched in Dubai, became the foundation upon which AIWF built its 2007 initiative to put the promotion of women's entrepreneurship as a major strategy to create jobs, catalyse economic development and foster social cohesion.

See also www.aiwfonline.com

ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM SIGNS MOU IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COLLABORATION WITH DIFC'S HAWKAMAH INSTITUTE

A highlight of the Dubai conference programme was a corporate governance workshop hosted in collaboration with the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance, *The Value of Good Corporate Governance for Women's Entrepreneurship in the MENA Region*.

At the start of the workshop session on Tuesday 11 December, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dr Nasser Saidi, Executive Director of Hawkamah to enable both organisations to advocate corporate sector reform and strengthen corporate governance for women entrepreneurs and their businesses in the MENA region.

"We are pleased to partner with AIWF to pioneer stronger corporate governance for women's businesses across the Arab region," Dr Saidi said at the signing ceremony in Dubai. "Improved corporate governance can lead to better management; accountability; minimised divergence between the interests of shareholders and management; access to external finance for expansion; divestment of existing operations for better opportunities; and the attraction of strategic investors."

Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman of AIWF, responded by saying: "We hope that our collaboration with Hawkamah will assist in addressing gender issues to ensure that women are given every opportunity to succeed in the workplace. We are honoured to join many major international organisations in supporting Hawkamah, an independent, private sector initiative that is improving the understanding and practice of corporate governance in the Middle East and North Africa."

The workshop endeavoured to explore the driving forces behind the heightened interest in corporate governance and the components of a successful approach to corporate governance for multinational businesses.

Additionally, it examined legal and regulatory models that shape successful environments for effective corporate governance practices; it approached a greater general understanding of corporate citizenship; and discussed how corporate governance can assist companies and economies in attracting investment capital through the improvement of both domestic and international investor confidence.

Specifically, it examined the current environment for female entrepreneurship in the MENA region; the impact of effective corporate governance measures for female owners of small, medium and large enterprises; and the forces of change promoting greater inclusion of women on corporate boards.

Esteemed guest speakers included **Dr Nasser Saidi**, Executive Director, Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance; **Mrs Nadereh Chamlou**, Senior Advisor to the Chief Economist MENA Region, The World Bank; **Dr Celia de Anca**, Merrill Lynch External Diversity Adviser; **Neveen El Tehri**, Chairperson, Delta Securities, Egypt; **Ms Ruth Martin**, Managing Director Securities & Investment Institute, UK; and **Dania Mchaourab**, Vice President Forsa.

Presentations from the workshop are available for download on the AIWF website.

The Hawkamah and AIWF alliance aims to encourage good corporate governance practices and promote the benefits of sound corporate governance to women's businesses throughout the region. The cooperation will include conducting corporate governance assessments, surveys and improvement plans for women entrepreneurs and their businesses.



Dr Nasser Saidi, Executive Director Hawkamah and Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman AIWF sign the Memorandum of Understanding

"Having three or more women board directors appears to be a precursor for notably stronger - than - average [corporate] performance."

Dr Nasser Saidi, Executive Director,
Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance

"Women entrepreneurs can benefit from stronger corporate governance systems and regulations because of the nature of their ownership patterns. Transparency and trust pays off."

Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor
to the Chief Economist MENA Region, The World Bank

"Women's profiles today represent the qualities needed at boardroom level. A clear definition of profiles in a well defined grid of needs will lead to a natural selection ... of women directors."

Celia de Anca, External Diversity Adviser, Merrill Lynch

"Proper corporate governance led to my companies ultimately going public and enabled us to further develop the group."

Neveen El Tahri, Chairperson, Delta Securities Egypt

ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM MARKS A YEAR OF STELLAR ACHIEVEMENT AT INAUGURAL DUBAI CONFERENCE



HE Sheikhha Lubna Al Qasimi, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani,
HE Dr Omar Bin Sulaiman, HE Mrs Suhair Al Ali

AIWF Chairman lauds Dubai's success as the ultimate paradigm for integration and prosperity in the new global economy

The Arab International Women's Forum held its first conference in the United Arab Emirates on 10 and 11 December 2007 under the Patronage of HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, Wife of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

Entitled *Powering the Future: Arab Business Women in a Modern Economy*, this outstanding initiative was the culmination of the AIWF 2007 Programme, and focused on key elements for economic success – namely, the creation of an enabling environment for the development of private enterprise and overcoming the challenges and barriers to greater female participation in the Arab economies.

The conference, held at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) at the kind invitation of the Governor of the DIFC, Dr Omar Bin Sulaiman, further developed the remit of the 2007 Programme theme, *Globalisation, Trade and Entrepreneurship*. It served as another bridge linking the City of Dubai, the City of London and the wider financial community, and provided a further opportunity to expand business partnerships whilst highlighting gender equality and good governance practices as key elements for unlocking the full potential of the region.

The Arab International Women's Forum welcomed 250 people from over 35 countries for this event, including 19 Arab countries. Delegates represented AIWF global partners, members, and other supporters; men and women who are engaged in significant roles within the global economy representing government, business, trade and academic and professional circles.

In welcoming guests Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman of AIWF, said, "AIWF aims to create an unrivalled forum for the development of multilateral corporate and public sector partnerships, with strong emphasis on the participation of global business, financial and governance organisations that strive to promote effective business relationships."

"In a global economy, the value of increased cooperation between global financial cities, the importance of private sector development and the invaluable exchange of successful business practices is the key to understanding and bringing about positive change," Mrs Al Kaylani continued. "The timing for Arab women to make real and tangible difference has never been more opportune, nor the demand for their contribution greater."

H.E. Dr Omar Bin Sulaiman, Governor of the Dubai International Financial Centre, welcomed the delegation with a rousing tribute to the economic achievements of women in the United Arab Emirates. Of women in the Arab world overall, he said, "Women entrepreneurs are growing rapidly, and dedicated

investments funds as well as conventional and Islamic banks are beginning to see them as a target group making finance available and boosting their numbers further." However, he warned, "Support mechanisms need to be strengthened and developed further for there are still many women who are not yet participants of the Arab Human Capital."

HE Sheikhha Lubna Al Qasimi, Minister of Economy, United Arab Emirates and AIWF Founder Board Member, delivered the Keynote Opening Address on Monday 10 December. "The Arab World, as a whole, is currently witnessing one of the world's fastest growth rates in terms of developing human capital," Her Excellency said. "Gone are the days when women's role is limited to the home. With world-class education facilities right at our doorsteps, as well as increased political representation, there is now a greater understanding and acceptance of the needs and rights of women in the Arab World." HE Sheikhha Lubna also outlined the successes of the United Arab Emirates in engaging women as invaluable human capital and emphasised the positive economic and social consequences of female empowerment through business and entrepreneurship.

HE Mrs Suhair Al Ali, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, relayed her professional challenges as a young woman in the male-oriented banking sector, as general manager and representative of the Saudi American Bank (SAMBA), an affiliate of Citigroup, in New York City. She cited the lack of mentorship and support as one of the major impediments to women's success in business, and shared her experiences of change management in both the private and the public sectors.

Eminent speakers, sharing their experience and world class expertise in global trade, finance and entrepreneurship in the three plenary sessions, included **Alderman Alison Gowman**, Partner DLA Piper UK; **Daniela Gressani**, Vice President MENA, The World Bank; **HRH Princess Mashaal Bint Faisal Bin Turki Bin Abdulaziz**, President of the Board of the Businesswomen Forum in the Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia; **Raja Al Gurg**, Managing Director, Easa Saleh Al Gurg and President, Dubai Business Woman Council; **Professor Aicha Belarbi**, University Mohammed V in Rabat, Former Moroccan Secretary of State and Ambassador to the European Union; **Mr Saad Benani**, Director Investment Banking MENA, Merrill Lynch; **Dr Zara Khatib**, Manager Technology Marketing and Deployment, ME Caspian & SE Asia Region, Shell; **Mrs Sahar El Sallab**, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Commercial International Bank, Egypt; **Dr Cristina Molinari**, Cabinet Adviser, Ministry of International Trade, Italy, **Mrs Kalliopi Bourdara**, Special Counsellor to the Foreign Minister of Greece; **Ms Sung-Joo Kim**, Chairperson & CEO, Sungjoo / MCM Group.

In her address Daniela Gressani, Vice President MENA, The World Bank, noted, "The business environment [in MENA] is largely gender neutral. This is very encouraging and suggests that women can rise to position of leadership within the private sector. Women entrepreneurs can play an even bigger role in promoting the increase in competitiveness necessary to transform the economies of the region from oil-based to diversified, integrated, market economies."

Alderman Alison Gowman, Partner, DLA Piper UK, provided valuable insight into DLA Piper's model for an empowered employee base. "We consider that what is achieved by promoting equality and diversity will add to our business bottom line. At DLA Piper, rather than acting on a gender-specific basis we work on a strategy that builds upon our strong vision and branding, and our international breadth for all." She explained the concept of "being local in order to go global", citing telling statistics on the participation of women in legal disciplines in the United Kingdom whilst encouraging Arab female professionals to participate more prolifically in law and policy-making.

Sung Joo Kim, Chairperson & CEO of Sungjoo / MCM Group, heralded the advent of ITC as a main conduit for female empowerment in both Arab and Asian economies. "Today's networked society certainly contributes to the successful running of my business. And it will also contribute to the partnership between Asia and the Arab world. We [women] have the power to harness this skill for the good of the world."

Christina Molinari, Special Advisor to HE Emma Bonino, Minister for International Trade and International Affairs, Italy, argued that the pillars of feminine empowerment are still "under construction" in most parts of the world, and emphasised the importance of education and training in this new knowledge-based economy. Through education, Dr Molinari argued, "women, at different stages of their lives, are presented with the possibility to enrich their wealth of knowledge."

Mrs Sahar El Sallab, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of Commercial International Bank (CIB) in Egypt, identified obstacles to women's enterprises and business expansion when she said, "Marketing was considered a main growth constraint as most women owned SMEs serve local and regional markets. Women had identified product quality, export know-how, highly bureaucratic business registration processes and export market procedures as impediments to accessing large, more lucrative markets. What was needed was exposure to successful private sector or successful organisations, providing communication skills links to the private sector and leadership skills."

Mrs El Sallab continued, "The Commercial International Bank was the first to introduce the concept of women's banking in Egypt in September 2006, and the first to create a special sector within the Bank to cater for women's financial and business opportunities. Although women's labour force in the Middle East is the lowest among regions, extensive efforts are being made to alter the culture and gear the region towards international standardised trends."

The conference programme also included three other important events, the launch of the outcomes document of the first event in 2007, the Roundtable review of the AIWF 2005 Programme Report & Recommendations; a joint workshop on corporate governance, that AIWF organised in collaboration with the Hawkamah Institute of Corporate Governance and, the launch of ***Domains of Influence: Arab Women Business Leaders in a New Economy*** profiling the achievements of thirty six successful Arab business leaders. These key events are all separately featured in articles in this newsletter.

Keynote guest speaker at the concluding event of the conference, the conference gala dinner, **Mr Saad Abdul Latif**, President of PepsiCo SAMEA, delivered cutting edge business intelligence on the position of women in the social, political and economic arenas of the region, and recommendations for further action in strengthening their roles in all these areas. "Companies, governments, leaders and people, both globally and in the Middle East, understand the importance of and are committed to promoting diversity in the workplace and beyond," said Mr Abdul Latif. "In the



Conference Participants during the Opening Session on December 10th 2007

business world, diversity is not just a moral position. It is a smart business proposition."

Mr Abdul Latif continued "Contrary to what many would believe, recognition of the importance of equal rights and opportunity for women is not a new concept in the Arab world. There is a long-standing tradition of female achievement in our part of the world." He commended AIWF for having made "great strides in advancing its mission of building bridges and strengthening the role of women in society and the economy."

AIWF was proud to have the support of Global Corporate and Institutional Partners whose generous support and cooperation made the 2007 Dubai Conference Programme possible and thanks are expressed to the AIWF conference Leading Partners, PepsiCo International and Abraaj Capital; our Programme Partners, The Hawkamah Institute and Merrill Lynch; our Supporting Partners, Shell, General Motors, Crescent Petroleum; and The Dubai Business Women Council, MCM, DLA Piper and the Jumeirah Group for their invaluable conference support.

"It is essential that we share our wealth of knowledge and experience, explore new ideas, tap new opportunities, and establish peer networks that will achieve the goal of powering the future for Arab business women."

HE Suhair Al Ali,
Minister of Planning and International Cooperation
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

"The realities that exist in the Arab world vary greatly – and we must keep in mind that the best approach for one country may not work for another."

HE Sheikha Lubna al Qasimi
Minister of Economy,
United Arab Emirates and AIWF Board Member

"Women in Greece and the Middle-East can collaborate in many fields, and share experiences of tradition and modernity in the context of EU and World Bank programs."

Kalliopi Bourdara
Special Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Greece

"Jobs will have to be increasingly created in and by the private sector, which depends on creative male and female entrepreneurs who are ready to innovate and take risks."

Daniela Gressani
Vice President MENA, The World Bank

"If we want to have any hope of holding our own in a highly competitive global economy, we can't afford to overlook any resource, and the most valuable is definitely our human capital."

Saad Abdul Latif
President of PepsiCo SAMEA

AIWF PARTNERS ON REGIONAL CONFERENCE WITH THE ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MARITIME TRANSPORT

In July, The Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport (IMO Compound) held a conference to discuss the role of women in the maritime industry. The two day event was held in Alexandria, Egypt, in partnership with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF).

Dr Khalida Qatami, AIWF Board Member, delivered a congratulatory message on behalf of the AIWF Chairman Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, who, in a January 2007 visit to the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport, had welcomed the proposal for further fruitful cooperation which had led to the event partnership. The conference, coordinated by AIWF Member, Dr Layla Mohamed El Saeed, Assistant President for Female Education for the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport, featured esteemed speakers from ten different countries, including Austria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Sweden, the UAE, the UK and the USA.

Speakers included HE Mr Ahmed Mohamed Lokman, President of the Arab Labour Organisation, League of Arab States; Ambassador Ali Maher, Director General of the Suzanne Mubarak International Peace Movement; Dr Edit Schlaffer, Founder and Chair of Women without Borders and Chairperson of the Austrian Foundation for World Population and International Cooperation; and Ms Naima Al Shayji, Secretary General for the Kuwait National Woman Committee.

Conference session topics were wide-ranging and covered the integration of women into the maritime industry; the enhancement of the role of women in the maritime transport sector

through academic achievement; marine environments and the participation of women in their protection; ocean governance; and e-commerce shipping technologies.

The conference also witnessed the launch of MENA and Africa International Women's Maritime Forum as a non-profit NGO that seeks to promote more female induction into the maritime industry. This forum will aim to build on and deepen the IMO's mainstreaming approach for which capacity building is crucial and the IMO training programmes which aim to target all levels: decision-makers, middle management and graduate students.

AIWF CHAIRMAN RECEIVES EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARD FROM MUSLIM POWER 100

Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, was among leading business and public figures recognised as a Muslim Power 100 leader at a glittering ceremony in the Hilton Hotel on Park Lane in London on 11 February 2007. She was also honoured further by being named the recipient of the Education Excellence Award and fulfilled the criteria of an outstanding leader through her work for AIWF in promoting the successes and challenges of women in Arab economies and in fostering intercultural business dialogue.

Established to recognise Muslims who have made significant contributions to the social, cultural and economic well being of Britain, the awards have been praised by commentators as a timely public reminder of the positive contribution the vast majority of Britain's 1.8 million-strong Muslim community.

They range from lords to lawyers, from authors to sporting icons, pre-eminent academics to giants of industry. All have two things in common – all are Muslim, and all have made an outstanding contribution to British society.

MEMBERS NEWS

The Hon Saida Agrebi, Member of the Tunisian Parliament, President of the Tunisian Mothers Association, and member of the AIWF Board of Trustees, attended the 9th African Union Summit in Accra, Ghana on behalf of the Arab International Women's Forum in June 2007. Mrs Agrebi reported on the involvement of African youth in implementing the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and also participated as a key speaker on the opening panel alongside Mary Robinson, former Irish President and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Saida Agrebi's presentation on the role of young African men and women in sustainable development was exceptionally well-received. She emphasized the importance of integration and communication as key to achieving the MDGs of poverty alleviation, education and literacy for all Africans, gender balance and women's rights, reproductive health, family planning, the eradication of maternal and infant mortality, and the spread of AIDS and disease.

Under the official patronage of **HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed in Rashid Al Maktoum**, Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, the inaugural International Design Forum (IDF) was held in May 2007. IDF's main objective was to determine how the challenges faced by the Arab world, while it undergoes fast-paced economic and construction growth, might be met by innovative, cutting edge design solutions.

The event attracted designers, architects, planners, developers, and senior decision makers from across the world to collectively contribute their knowledge and expertise in

interactive workshops, labs, debates and panel discussions. AIWF Member Suha Yusuf, who attended the event at the invitation of the organizers, also participated as a panellist on Green Design, a subject she is especially passionate about having spent over 25 years as an interior design consultant on numerous design projects in the Middle East and beyond.

"I was particularly encouraged to notice the attendance and participation of many enthusiastic young Arab designers," Ms Yusuf reported. "For me personally, one of the important concepts that were repeated and stressed by many of the participants was the urgent need in the Arab world to integrate more sustainable design principals in buildings, ensure that they are appropriate for their particular environmental conditions, and have greater identity that is unique to the region and relevant to the culture and tradition of the country."

AIWF wishes to acknowledge the 2007 successes of **Elham Zeadat**, Founder of Bloom Dead Sea Gift Enterprise. Ms Zeadat was a proud participant in the Business Women Leaders Summit in the US and in Jordan, and met First Lady Laura Bush during her travels to the US. She received the Innovation Entrepreneurs Award from Her Highness Sheikha Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, wife of the King of Bahrain, at the Rawda Palace. Bloom Dead Sea products were also showcased at the Middle East Exclusive Exhibition at the Dubai World Trade Centre and the Arab Naturals Fair in Abu Dhabi in December 2007.

In early December, Bloom also participated in one of China's most prominent conferences attended by 350 dermatologists and beauticians.

2007 AIWF DIARY HIGHLIGHTS

The Forbes CEO Middle East Forum (Doha, Qatar) February 2007

Chairman Haifa Al Kaylani represented AIWF at the inaugural Forbes CEO Middle East Forum in Doha, Qatar, at the kind invitation of Forbes' Founder and CEO, Mr Steve Forbes.

Tawteen Symposium on Learning and Social Issues (Abu Dhabi) February 2007

Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani participated in this two day symposium on key learning and social issues facing the Arab world which was opened by HE Sheikha Lubna Al Qassimi, UAE Minister of Economy and AIWF Board Member. Chaired by Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean in her capacity as Chair of the MENA Learning & Leadership Advisory Panel, the event marked the launch of the Tawteen Project.

The Economist 11th Roundtable with the Government of Greece (Athens, Greece) – April 2007

The Chairman AIWF, Haifa Al Kaylani was an invited guest speaker on the topic of competitiveness of the Arab world sharing her thoughts on enhancing regional business collaboration and implementing economic reforms.

The Global Summit of Women (Berlin) – June 2007

More than one thousand businesswomen from 91 countries took part in the 17th Global Summit of Women in Berlin, including fifty international government ministers and an exceptionally strong Asian contingent. AIWF was a partner and Mrs Inge Relph, Board Member attended.

The 10th Global Leadership Forum of Women's International Networking (Oslo) - Sept 2007

730 outstanding women gathered in Oslo, Norway for this global leadership forum that emphasised the importance of women working together across borders and boundaries, organised by AIWF Member and WIN Director, Kristen Engvig.

The New Arab Woman – A Forum of Leadership & Social Responsibility (Dubai) – October 2007

AIWF was a Partner for this successful forum, held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Haya bint Al Hussain. The Forum, organized by Al-Iktissad Wal-Aamal Group and Al Hasnaa magazine emphasized the fundamental role of the Arab woman and her various powers and abilities in leadership, management, politics, business, and education. Board Member, Khalidah Ahmed Al Qatami delivered the AIWF message. Other Board Members attending were the Saida Agrebi MP and Dr Deisi Noeli Weber Kusztra.

Inauguration of Harvard President Drew Faust October 2007

AIWF Chairman, Haifa Al Kaylani, and in her role as Vice President International the Women's Leadership Board, was a guest at the inauguration ceremony to welcome Drew Faust, who was formally installed as Harvard's 28th president on Friday 12

October 2007, during an outdoor ceremony in the university's Tercentenary Theatre.

Women in Business Management & Investment (Damascus) October 2007

A new link with Syrian business women was established when AIWF participated at the country's first international women's business conference at the invitation of Business Women Committee at the Damascus Chamber of Commerce. The forum delivered a key message on the importance of reforms, education and transparency for building a stronger economic market for Syria and opportunities for women. Ragdha Kurdi, Board Member represented AIWF and delivered a paper on *Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East*, also drawing on and sharing her own business experiences.

The Evian Group (Switzerland) – November 2007

AIWF Chairman Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani participated as a panellist at the Evian Group Plenary Meeting in Switzerland in November, speaking on the ethical imperative for sustainable globalisation.

The Arab Business Council of the World Economic Forum (Cairo) November 2007

The Arab Business Council of the World Economic Forum (ABC) gathered for its Fourth Annual Meeting in Cairo, Egypt from 17 to 18 November, bringing together over 170 leading business, government and public personalities from 25 countries across the region among them Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman AIWF.

Luxuria 2007 – November 2007

AIWF Chairman Haifa Al Kaylani's commitment to effect positive change and her experience in bringing together women from different cultures provided an illuminating foundation for her address at the Luxuria 2007 conference, *Where Cultures Change, at Claridge's Hotel in London. Entitled, A Force for Change: Arab Women in a Global Economy*. Mrs Al Kaylani's presentation argued that the participation of Arab women in business is not only an economic necessity, but a catalyst for peace, progression and prosperity. Her remarks were exceptionally well-received by the audience of experienced global professionals, and attracted much post-conference international interest in the work of AIWF.

MENA-OECD Women's Business Leaders and Business Forum (Cairo) – November 2007

The MENA-OECD Forum, launched by Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General, addressed the economic progress of the MENA region and the key challenges and immense opportunities of increasing the role of women in economic activity. Mrs Al Kaylani's paper in the session on *Experience in Enhancing the Role of Women in the Economy: Achievements & Strategies* was very competently delivered by Dr Randa Fouad, Secretary General, Arab Media Forum on Environment and Development, Egypt.

AIWF WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH APPRECIATION THE VALUED SUPPORT OF AIWF GLOBAL ANNUAL PARTNERS



AIWF AND MERRILL LYNCH CELEBRATE THEIR PARTNERSHIPS IN DUBAI

Celebrating the new partnership with Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) and the launch of their new offices in Dubai, on 20 July 2007, Merrill Lynch presented an overview of their business strategy in the region and demonstrated their commitment to the development of professional women in the Middle East.

The agenda focused on how Merrill Lynch has positioned itself to take advantage of the next stage of globalisation and how the company is building on recent successes. A panel discussion explored the keys to a successful career in banking and finance, and **Eva Castillo**, ML Head of Global Private Client EMEA and **Hannelore Graf**, ML financial advisor, looked at the investment trends and market potential of female investors in the region.

The 50 attendees included partners and members of the AIWF and Dubai Business Women's Council (DBWC), local business women and students. Merrill Lynch was well represented with senior executives including **Ahmass Fakahany**, president.

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

In her opening address, **Haifa Al Kaylani**, chairman of the AIWF said, "we are proud to be jointly hosting this meeting with our valued new Annual Global Partner Merrill Lynch.

Women in the Arab World have achieved significant advancement in recent years. There are women CEOs, women government officials, women professors, women engineers; women run e-businesses and financial institutions. However, the utilisation of Arab women's capabilities through economic and political participation remains the lowest in the world in quantitative terms as evidenced by the fact that in 2005 women made up only 28% of the work force. One of the reasons identified is lack of awareness of the opportunities available. Another is the need for specific management skills and competences.

The impact of overcoming challenges and increasing benefits to women will be seen as the next major breakthrough in the economic development of the Arab World."



The panel: (left to right) Raja Al Gurg, Eva Castillo, Celia de Anca, Subha Barry

SUCCESS FROM DIVERSITY

Speaking on the importance of Diversity to Merrill Lynch, **Bob Wigley**, EMEA Chairman said, "At Merrill Lynch, we firmly believe that we must create an environment where we can attract, retain and develop the best female talent available - it is our most important diversity objective in EMEA and sends a clear message to our clients and partners as well as colleagues that female talent is vital to our continuing success as a business.

In order to be competitive and to find the most innovative and creative solutions to our clients' needs, firms need to have staff that can provide the widest possible range of perspectives. The firms that will succeed will be those who develop global teams with the widest pools of knowledge to create the best local solutions for their clients. The differences companies can leverage will be the differentiator in their performance.

We're committed to the Middle East for the long term, because we think the opportunities are tremendous. In short, this region is of key strategic importance and will continue to be one of the vital areas of growth for our business."

Jeffrey Culpepper, Head of Global Markets and Investment Banking Middle East and Africa, commented that, "The economic and intellectual power of women in the region is

dramatically under represented in trading and investment banking. We at Merrill Lynch will be working to correct this imbalance by actively seeking out women professionals and graduates to join our Global Markets and Investment Banking team."

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

A lively panel discussion saw active participation from the audience, with advice on having a successful career in banking and new markets of talent and wealth emerging in the Middle East. Panellists included **Raja Al Gurg**, DBWC president, **Eva Castillo**, ML Head of Global Private Client EMEA, **Celia de Anca**, ML External Diversity Advisor and **Subha Barry**, ML Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion.

THE UN ARAB REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES

This UN regional workshop, held in Amman, Jordan from 13 – 15 March, 2007, concentrated on the civic engagement of Arab citizens in truly impacting governmental decisions and public policy, and explored the ever-important role that the private sector plays in this regard. The workshop emphasized the crucial role of the Arab Region in cultivating diversity and ridding itself of hegemony.

Though significant progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set for the Arab world, there is still much that can be learnt from the experiences of others within the region. Citizens in the Arab world, the workshop contended, can no longer afford to remain passive recipients of authoritarian rule, and must become involved in capacity-building initiatives as a crucial part of their political empowerment.

The Amman Declaration that concluded the conference covered initiatives by the Jordanian government and local authorities, and highlighted the many challenges, threats and opportunities identified by delegates from various Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Bahrain. The workshop also concluded on the considerations of Civic Engagement within Good Governance Practices, mainly through the acknowledgement of the importance of effective participation of citizens and indigenous peoples in public policy programs.

It reaffirmed UN Economic and Social Council Resolution E/RES/2005/55, which reinforced the need to engage civil society participation in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and stressed the importance of governance capacity-building in reaching national development objectives and the internationally agreed MDGs. The conference urged recognition of the critical role of civil society organizations, NGOs, the private sector, academia, and media organizations to ensure that public policies and programs are formulated and implemented in an effective and transparent manner.

Dr Alanoud Alsharekh
London Middle East Institute at SOAS

HOW TO JOIN AIWF

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