



ARAB INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S FORUM

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

# **Arab International Women's Forum**

## **NGO Member of the UN Global Compact**

### **2023 Communication on Engagement**

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## 1 Message from the Chair of the AIWF Executive Committee



**HE Mona Al Moayyed**

*Chair of the Executive  
Committee of the Arab  
International Women's  
Forum*

**As Chair of the AIWF Executive Committee and on behalf of the Board of the Arab International Women's Forum, I am proud to present this progress report bringing AIWF's key programmes, initiatives, and events from 2021– 2023 together in one comprehensive communication.**

I am pleased to reiterate the commitment of AIWF to the UN Global Compact values and vision as well as to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in the areas of women's and youth empowerment, economic opportunity for all, and addressing some of the Arab world's most critical development challenges, including water scarcity, food insecurity and youth unemployment.

AIWF was founded in London in 2001 as a development organisation with the clear aim of supporting and enhancing the role of women in the social and economic development of their countries and across the Middle East region. Working across the board with civil society, the private sector, academia and governments, AIWF's key areas for action are gender empowerment, diversity and inclusion; sustainability, STEM and women-led innovation; youth empowerment; and the future of work.

From the heart of the Arab world and internationally from our head office in London, AIWF brings partners in all spheres together to build bridges and build business, effect progress, correct negative stereotyping and build the capacity of Arab women at every level and in every sector.

For over two decades, AIWF has hosted and partnered on key events, initiatives and conferences, held alternately between London, Western European capitals and major business hubs throughout the MENA as well as virtually. Events held since 2001 have examined strategies for job creation, inclusive sustainable development; the role of women as engines of economic growth; women, peace and security, refugee maternal health and refugee entrepreneurship; women in law and the professions; women-led entrepreneurship, research and innovation; food security, water scarcity, climate action and sustainable energy; and women in healthcare and STEM education.

Every one of these initiatives has brought our valued stakeholders together to understand the challenges, identify opportunities, and document a strategic plan for action in our Reports and Recommendations, which are always disseminated widely within our global advocacy network to impact both policy and practice and advance legislative reform, gender parity in policy, and better linkage between industry and education. AIWF works closely with a global network of corporate and institutional partners to promote and prioritise the engagement of women and youth towards finding innovative and actionable solutions to the multi-faceted and complex environmental, economic security, and developmental challenges the MENA region faces.

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AIWF links partners in academia with partners in industry and the private sector to address the well-known skills mismatch in the region and integrate entrepreneurship and sustainability education into mainstream curricula. AIWF also frequently supports global development events, campaigns and partner initiatives by facilitating introductions and nominations for Arab and international women to enjoy opportunities as keynote speakers and participants at high-level international conferences and events, as award nominees, and as summer school and training programme attendees.

We are proud to present this report, which features a full and detailed summary of many of our initiatives and engagements in the reporting period of 2021 - 2023 that are aligned with our commitment to the UN Global Compact Principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We look forward to advancing our call for women and youth to be real drivers of change in the Arab world in this momentous moment for the region and in the final stretch towards 2030 with an eye to what comes after the 2030 watershed. Through public-private partnerships and international co-operation, seeking improvements in institutional support and legal frameworks to provide increased opportunities for women and youth in business and in economic and political life, we can meet the challenges of the Arab region head on.

**HE Mona Al Moayyed**

Chair of the AIWF Executive Committee  
Arab International Women's Forum

## **2 Statement of Continued Support**

**15 June 2023**

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the Arab International Women's Forum reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organisation has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

**HE Mona Al Moayyed**

Chair of the AIWF Executive Committee  
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### 3 Description of Activities & Key Events in Reporting Period to Support UN Global Compact Principles

#### Period of activity covered by this Communication on Engagement:

**From:** June 2021

**To:** May 2023

AIWF, as an NGO Member of the UN Global Compact, is committed to integrating the SDGs into the programming of all its conferences, initiatives, and activities. Our events and initiatives are designed to identify and explore new opportunities for women leaders in business and in public service, from the MENA region and internationally, and to work closely and collaboratively with stakeholders at all levels to deliver actionable, impact-oriented recommendations and solutions to the barriers and challenges women and young people face in a rapidly changing and uncertain future world of work.

This summary of AIWF activities, engagements and initiatives is by no means comprehensive but serves as a description of actions that AIWF has undertaken in this reporting period under its core mission and commitment to support and enhance the role of women in the MENA region and beyond. Each action is linked with the corresponding Principles to which the action is most closely aligned.

#### Principles most closely aligned with the work of AIWF in this reporting period:

**Principle 1** ('Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights');

**Principle 6** ('Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation');

**Principle 7** ('Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges');

**Principle 8** ('Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility');

**Principle 9** ('Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies').

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**2023**

**MAY 2023**

**AIWF x WiSER Conference 'On the Road to COP28' examines critical intersectional development challenges of climate, water scarcity and food security, women's economic participation and youth empowerment in leadup to COP28 in the UAE later in the year**



On 10 May 2023, ahead of the UAE hosting the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 later this year, the Arab International Women's Forum and the Women in Sustainability, Environment and Renewable Energy platform (WiSER, an initiative of Masdar) joined forces to champion women's collective spirit for innovation at a major Conference at the Royal Academy of Engineering in London, 'On the Road to COP28: Women-Led Innovation in Climate, Sustainability & STEM'.

'On The Road to COP28' was a major milestone in the AIWF x WiSER partnership, a unique and inclusive opportunity to facilitate new partnerships in the spirit of SDG17 ('Partnerships for the Goals') and to ensure women's voices are front and centre in global conversations about climate action, food security, water resilience, clean energy, the future of work, responsible business, financing sustainability and innovation, and technology and the digital economy. The initiative, designed to foster greater UK-GCC-MENA collaboration, was a vital and unique contribution from the AIWF and



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WiSER communities to the global dialogue on women's critical role in mitigating climate change and innovating sustainable, equitable and inclusive solutions towards a better future for people and planet.

The programme welcomed outstanding Guest Speakers to the Opening Keynote Session, including Haifa Al Kaylani, President & Founder, Arab International Women's Forum, UK; Dr Lamya Fawwaz, Executive Director of Brand and Strategic Initiatives at Masdar, and Program Director of WiSER; Lord Swire KCMG PC, Deputy Chairman of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, Member of the House of Lords; Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas DBE, Chair of the Trustees, Commonwealth War Graves Foundation, UK; and Dr Hayaatun Sillem CBE, CEO, Royal Academy of Engineering, UK.



**Many of the core COP28 topics underpinned the programme and recurred throughout the day's discussions: capacity-building, climate finance, climate technology, cooperative action on the SDGs, education, youth, gender and innovation.**

Session 1, Championing women-led innovation in MENA sustainable agriculture for a food-secure, water-resilient future, was chaired by Haifa Al Kaylani and examined the role of women and technology in sustainable agriculture for a food-secure, water-resilient future, water being the great climate connector, welcoming Julian Lampietti, Manager for Global Engagement in the Agriculture and Food Global Practice, The World Bank, USA; Dr Majd Alnaber, Director of Science for Society



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Centre, Royal Scientific Society, Jordan; Dr Dalal Al Ghawas, Founder & CEO, Agrifood Consultancy, Singapore; and Sarah Roberts, CEO, Practical Action, UK as speakers.



Session 2, Mainstreaming Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in tech/ AI entrepreneurship and the digital economy, was chaired by Dr Loubna Bouarfa, Machine learning scientist and founder CEO of OKRA.AI and Advisory Board Member, Oxford Internet Institute, and examined new opportunities for women innovators in tech / AI entrepreneurship and the digital economy, welcoming as speakers Fatima Hadj, Chief Climate Investment Strategist, HSBC Asset Management, UK; Margarete McGrath, Global Advisory and Strategy Partner Lead, Dell Technologies, UK; Jamila Saidi, Global Head of Digital Commerce | Head of Retail & Luxury (Trade & Investment), Department for Business & Trade, UK; and Elena Sinel, Founder, Teens in AI, UK.

Session 3, Women-led innovation in clean energy, environmental protection, and climate action: Creating new opportunities through partnership and collaboration, was chaired by Olulana Nwosu, Director of Policy & Markets, World Energy Council, UK, and explored women's leadership in clean energy, environmental protection, and climate action. For this session, we had the pleasure of welcoming Iman Ustadi, Head of Negotiations-UAE Special Envoy for Climate Change & WISER Pioneer 2023, UAE; Phoebe Stone, Partner-Head of Sustainable Investing, LGT Wealth Management, UK; and Eleanor Webster, Head of Secretariat, Mission Innovation, UK.

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Session 4, Preparing for the Future of Work: Empowering the next generation of sustainability leaders through education, skills and decent work, was chaired by Chidi King, Branch Chief, Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI), in the ILO Conditions of Work and Equality Department, ILO, and explored the need to prepare for the future of work in the MENA spotlighting the importance of education, skills and decent work, benefiting from the insights of Professor Yusra Mouzughy, President, Royal University for Women, Bahrain; Noora AlMarzooqi, Board Member, Vice President-Group Strategic Investments at ADNOC; and Karoona Ramah Sleightholme, Head of Digital & IT Delivery, Vodafone, UK.

Session 5, Financing women-and youth led sustainability research, innovation and entrepreneurship: Navigating access to finance and impact investing, was chaired by Barbara Rambousek, Director, Gender & Economic Inclusion, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, UK, and examined issues around access to finance and impact investing for women innovators and young leaders working in the sustainability spheres, with Joumana Asso, Founder & Managing Director, Clima Capital Partners, USA; Iveta Tancheva-Nikolova, Director – Investment Management, SANAD Fund for MSME, Germany; and Marisa Drew, Chief Sustainability Officer at Standard Chartered, joining us as panel speakers.



We were especially proud to spotlight the inspirational AIWF Young Arab Women Leaders alumni and WiSER Pioneers 2023 in a special session finale, The Future We Want, chaired by Emma Cox, Global

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Climate Leader, PwC and welcoming the following inspirational young leaders as speakers: Heba Al Emara, Managing Director Middle East, Vistra, UK/UAE; Christelle Comair, Policy Advisor on youth and women's empowerment, University of Paris-Saclay; 2021-2022 Research Fellow at the Women And Public Policy Program (WAPPP), Harvard Kennedy School; Dr Mona Hamade, Partnerships Development Manager at Meta, UK; Shalom Iboh, Field Engineering Operator Notore Plc & WiSER Pioneer 2023, Nigeria; Hajer Ben Charrada, Manager Corporate Strategy TAQA & WiSER Pioneer 2023, UAE; and Monica Gao, Solicitor (England & Wales) in Sustainability & WiSER Pioneer 2023, UAE.



The AIWF x WiSER Conference was attended by 120 senior and emerging women leaders working in government, the international institutions, ESG, STEM, finance, business, entrepreneurship, civil society representatives, academics and higher education leaders. We were also proud to welcome a number of Masters students and early career researchers, and AIWF members, guests, Fellows and delegates who joined us from across the UK, EU and the Arab world, many coming especially from the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia and other MENA states as well as North Africa and Nigeria.

AIWF always looks forward and aims to deliver positive and productive impact through all our initiatives that will benefit women and young leaders in the region and meaningfully support their economic and social inclusion towards a peaceful and more prosperous future for the MENA Region

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overall. As Her Excellency Razan Al Mubarak, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for the COP28 Presidency, has said: “A healthy environment, including its climate and biodiversity, is central to everyone’s wellbeing. We must go beyond business as usual and elevate nature as an important solution to climate change. To accomplish this, we need everyone to contribute to global climate action, including women, youth, and indigenous people, as well as business, government, civil society, and academia.”

Accordingly, the discussions and conclusions emerging from the panel sessions will be synthesised into a report and recommendations that will be published in the coming few months in partnership with WiSER, and which shall duly be presented to the COP28 leadership in the UAE, who we commend for bringing nations together and seeking to unite the world towards agreement on bold, practical, and ambitious solutions to the most pressing global challenge of our time, putting us all on the right track to realising critical climate goals as set out in the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.



**FEBRUARY 2023**

**AIWF and Pfizer co-host second virtual panel in the 'DEI by Design' empowerment series**



The Arab International Women's Forum and Pfizer Middle East co-hosted the second session in our high-level virtual panel series in March 2023, as part of our collaboration titled 'D&I by Design: Women's Leadership & Legacy in Health' and launched in December 2022. The second session, *Mainstreaming and embedding DEI into healthcare cultures and practices* (held on Thursday 09 March 2023), addressed challenges, opportunities and strategies to elevate gender diversity and inclusion in healthcare sector spaces and in both corporate and research / discovery / practice-based working culture. This was the second of the three roundtable events that we will undertake between 2022 and 2023 in which a high-level D&I panel explored the importance of mainstreaming and embedding DEI into healthcare working spaces and cultures. Speakers for this panel session, which was moderated by Yomna Kotb (Director, Policy & Public Affairs ELII Cluster (Egypt, Levant, Iraq & Iran), included Dr Oualae Alami, AIWF Board Member & Global Influenza Lead, Pfizer; Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, World Health Organization Representative, Egypt; Dr Hanan Gewefel, CEO, Women & Metal Imaging, Egypt; and Dr Reem Al-Ajlouni, Director, Jordan Breast Cancer Program, Jordan. Through this initiative, AIWF and Pfizer aim to create a positive and impactful platform to develop the next generation of women leaders in health, mainstreaming a powerful shift in workplace culture towards true gender parity and encouraging both corporate policy change as well as a decisive shift in the narrative on women's leadership in health.

## DECEMBER 2022

**AIWF and Pfizer successfully launch 'DEI By Design' joint initiative to empower MENA women's leadership in health**



On 13 December, the Arab International Women's Forum and Pfizer were delighted to launch our new 'DEI By Design' joint initiative to empower MENA women's leadership in health, following our earlier announcement that in 2022-2023, AIWF and Pfizer will collaborate on a virtual panel series exploring salient diversity issues impacting women's inclusion in global and MENA health.

In this first session, a high-level DEI panel explored the importance of mentorship, role modelling, recognition, and visibility in empowering women to progress in their careers in the health sectors in the MENA region, in discovery, research, and innovation. For this panel discussion, which was moderated by Ouardia Djoudjai, Category Lead Oncology for Pfizer, AIWF and Pfizer were proud to welcome Dr Oualae Alami, Global Influenza Lead, Pfizer & AIWF Board Member; Dr Mariam Matar, Founder and Chairperson, UAE Genetic Diseases Association, UAE; Dr Maha Al Mozaini, Scientist & Director, King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Center, KSA; and Dr Thekra Hasan, Research and Innovation Center – Department of Health, UAE. Please see the AIWF website for the full event report.



**2022**

**OCTOBER 2022**

**AIWF hosts 'Women on Boards Roundtable' with Pearl Initiative, AUC School of Business and 30% Club MENA**

The Arab International Women's Forum was proud to collaborate with the Pearl Initiative, the American University in Cairo School of Business, and the 30% Club MENA on this virtual roundtable on 'Women on Boards Roundtable: Models for transforming women's board readiness and leadership success in the MENA', exploring models for transforming women's board readiness and leadership success in the region. Moderated by the Pearl Initiative's Executive Director Ranya Saadawi and with welcome remarks from AIWF Board Member Raghda Kurdi and an opening keynote from Dr Mohamed Farid Saleh, Executive Chairman of the Egypt Financial Regulatory Authority, this event brought together leaders from the private sector, international development organisations, and higher education for a high-level D&I discussion on steps that stakeholders can take to create innovative programmes, partnerships, and initiatives to support women's readiness and leadership on boards; mainstream a powerful shift in corporate culture towards true gender parity; and encourage state and corporate policy change.

Initiatives that were explored included Egypt's Women on Boards Observatory, the ILO's new AllOnBoard initiative to promote women's representation on boards as well as other interventions on decent work for women, and the 30% Club MENA. The roundtable also welcomed senior speakers from AIWF Global Partners PepsiCo and PwC, and from Grant Thornton UAE, all sharing tried and tested private sector strategies and best practices for promoting gender parity on executive boards and in the MENA workforce towards the realisation of SDG 5. Invitations to attend the session were extended to government policymakers and representatives of labour ministries, think tanks and research institutes, business leaders, women's business councils, D&I leaders, higher education, and NGOs, all steering their companies and institutions towards gender parity and equality on boards and in business leadership, in both the MENA region and internationally.

## **SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **AIWF Board Member Raghda Kurdi delivers keynote at 8th TICAD on women and sustainable agriculture in the MENA**

In September 2022, AIWF Board Member Raghda Kurdi participated as a keynote speaker for the 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development, 'Unlocking the potential of a multistakeholder approach to a healthy food system'. The empowerment of women in the rural economy, and the growing role of women in sustainable agriculture, are key advocacy tracks with which AIWF has been deeply engaged over the last few years. In her address, Raghda explored the importance of ensuring economic inclusion for women in sustainable agriculture and highlighted the need to empower women's leadership in agribusiness and agritech, and to foster equitable, lasting transformation in global and MENA food systems through women's innovation and entrepreneurship.

In her keynote, Raghda said: "For women entrepreneurs in agriculture, we need to strengthen capacity and skills and provide essential training, funding, and mentorship opportunities to help them start up, scale up and create the jobs that are so desperately needed in the region. In agricultural research, sciences, and policymaking, we need to empower the region's many highly educated and qualified women to take on leadership roles where they can contribute to mainstreaming sustainable agriculture and reforming global food systems through a gender equality lens."

AIWF extends our sincere appreciation to the International Fund for Agricultural Development for their kind invitation to the Arab International Women's Forum to participate in this timely and important discussion.

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**JUNE 2022**

**AIWF President & Founder Haifa Al Kaylani delivers keynote at The Cyprus Institute Conference on Hydropdiplomacy**



On 22 June AIWF President & Founder Haifa Al Kaylani participated as a keynote speaker at a high-level conference in Nicosia, held under the framework of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East Climate Initiative at the Cyprus Institute under the title 'Hydrodiplomacy and the Nexus in the EMME – Towards a Regional Cooperation' and under the auspices of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Cyprus Government Initiative for Coordinating Climate Change Actions in the Eastern Mediterranean & Middle East region (EMME-CCI).

The conference provided a much-needed platform for solutions-oriented dialogue on hydro-diplomacy in the Mediterranean and surrounding countries. Discussions centred on the significance of water to economic security as well as to cultural and natural heritage, the role of agriculture in sustainable development of Mediterranean countries, and the impact of climate change in conflict environments. These are all issues of critical importance for the MENA Region, where accessible fresh water in the region has fallen by two thirds in the past 40 years and now amounts to 10 times less per capita availability than the world average. Food and water insecurity are increasingly being linked to displacement and conflict in the region, with real-time examples affecting countries such as Jordan

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and Lebanon, where the Syrian refugee populations are placing increasing pressure on the agriculture sectors, food supply networks, and on water resources.

The Board of AIWF extend their warm appreciation to Professor Costas Papanicolas, the President of the Cyprus Institute, and to Dr Fadi Comair, Director of the Energy, Environment, Water and Research Centre of the Cyprus Institute, for their kind invitation for her to join this most prestigious gathering of academics, experts and international leaders in climate action, food security, sustainable agriculture and water scarcity. AIWF wholeheartedly commends Dr Comair and his outstanding team at The Cyprus Institute for their pioneering scientific work on water and climate, and their steadfast focus on finding innovative, data-driven solutions to the region's salient climate challenges. AIWF looks forward to closer cooperation with the Cyprus Institute and the high-level partners of this excellent initiative in the future.

## JANUARY 2022

**AIWF participates at the WiSER Annual Forum on 'Women in Sustainability, Environment and Renewable Energy as part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week**



AIWF was delighted to participate at the WiSER Annual Forum on 'Women in Sustainability, Environment and Renewable Energy', held on January 18th 2022 as part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week – ADSW. AIWF President & Founder Haifa Al Kaylani joined other leading experts, policy makers and industry leaders in discussing the critically important topics of energy access, women's role in sustainable development, and women's leadership in the energy sector. All of us at AIWF are proud to have worked closely with WiSER since the signing of our MoU in March 2021, in which we set out our shared vision for empowering women in sustainability in the MENA region and beyond.

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**2021**

**DECEMBER 2021**

**AIWF hosts virtual panel discussion on MENA mental health and resilience in the workplace**



AIWF was proud to host a virtual panel session, 'Building Resilience in the MENA Workplace', on 09 December 2021 which addressed women's resilience and wellbeing at work post-COVID. Chaired by AIWF Board Member and CEO of Pharmamed Hanan Saab, the event was the first session in a three-part programme that AIWF will run into 2022. This inaugural event welcomed renowned business and HR professionals from the MENA Region, including Naysan Firoozmand, VP and Head of Global Executive Coaching at Hult EF; Marie Louise Ek, Senior Director HR at PepsiCo; and with Rima Slim, Executive Coach, Hult Ashridge Accredited, moderating.

Discussions were focused on recognising the signs of burnout; breaking through 'taboo' subjects such as mental health in the MENA Region; building resilience to manage mental health in your professional and personal life; adapting to new complexities in the post-COVID world of work; harnessing new opportunities that might arise from new realities; and contributing to creating a more human-centered working culture in the MENA.



## **NOVEMBER 2021**

### **AIWF hosts virtual roundtable to support equality and diversity in the MENA media**

AIWF was proud to host its first event in the Saraha Series, titled 'Women in the Media', a virtual panel event held on 24 November 2021 supported by PRCA MENA and GWPR.

The event was held in full partnership with Taa Marbouta, a women-in-PR empowerment movement that introduced the first open to all, women-to-women mentorship programme in the MENA region, co-owned by founding partners PRCA MENA (the world's largest Public Relations Association) and GWPR (Global Women in PR), with global integrated communications network Ogilvy as a founding and creative partner.

Conceptualised and presented by AIWF, Taa Marbouta, and a range of inspiring partners, the first event of the Saraha Series aims to explore honest and open dialogue around the challenges women face in climbing the professional ladder, receiving equal representation, and increasing the level of senior representation in the corporate environment. For this session, a community of inspiring women and men discuss diversity and inclusion challenges experienced by women in media, communications, and related creative fields — both in terms of their participation in the sector and how they're represented externally.

The session provided a valuable forum for open, honest dialogue on the challenges of female representation in the media, PR and communications industries, welcoming distinguished speakers from Memac Ogilvy, TikTok, CNN Arabic, Microsoft, American University of Sharjah, Khaleej Times, GEMS Education, and She is Arab.

Please see the AIWF website for the full event report.

## **NOVEMBER 2021**

### **AIWF and the Pearl Initiative Virtual Roundtable 'Diversity on Corporate Boards & MENA Family Business'**

The Arab International Women's Forum and the Pearl Initiative were pleased to jointly host a virtual roundtable, 'Diversity on Corporate Boards & MENA Family Business', on 17 November 2021. The roundtable welcomed Ranya Saadawi, Executive Director, Pearl Initiative; Hani Ashkar, Middle East Senior Partner, PwC; Mona Al Moayyed, Managing Director YK Al Moayyed & Sons; and; and Wael Ismail, Vice President Corporate Affairs MENA & Pakistan, PepsiCo.

For this unique session, which was moderated by Diana Wilde, Co-Founder of Aurora50, AIWF and the Pearl Initiative brought gender parity champions from the MENA together to share their companies' tried and tested strategies and best practices for promoting diversity on executive boards and in the MENA workforce; discuss the link between women's representation on boards with better corporate governance and improved diversity and inclusion, learning from what has worked elsewhere and building on the groundswell of support for change in the region and globally; highlight the complexities and opportunities for women's leadership on family business boards, in succession, and in governance of family business; and address how business leaders can promote gender parity on corporate boards and in executive leadership. The recording of this event was shared on the AIWF You Tube channel.

## **JUNE 2021**

### **AIWF President & Founder Haifa Al Kaylani supports the World Bank's #DigitalAg4Her Hackathon**

In June 2021, AIWF President & Founder Haifa Al Kaylani was invited to serve as part of the final selection committee for the first edition of the #DigitalAg4Her Hackathon, organised by The World Bank Group's Mashreq Gender Facility and Agriculture and Food Global Practice, which aimed to crowdsource and support innovative ICT-based solutions through women led-initiatives, tailored to enhance women's productivity in the #agrifoodtech sector in Lebanon. The Hackathon was organised in collaboration with Berytech, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture in Lebanon, and with the technical support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Through the online hackathon, teams of innovators led by women discovered real challenges facing the agri-food sector across Lebanon, learn how to transform their idea into a valid business solution through intensive online workshops, prototype their solution, and then pitch it to a panel of judges.

Held online over ten consecutive days, the hackathon was an exciting opportunity for teams to engage with technologies such as Internet of Things, Big Data, and Artificial Intelligence. Professionals and experts from different backgrounds were given the opportunity to learn, experiment and build agri-food solutions that can lead them to create their own start-ups. The jury also included Constantin Salameh, Investment Expert; Maurice Saade, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) representative in Lebanon; Reem Nejdawi, Chief Food and Environment Policies Section at United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia – ESCWA; and Wafaa El Dikah Hamzé, Senior Adviser at the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. During the selection session, the eight shortlisted finalists from the 20 participating teams pitched their solution and presented their demos to the jury to the DigitalAg4Her Hackathon. The quality of the presentations was outstanding, and three winners were selected to receive in-kind grants for services up to the value of \$4,000 (such as advisory services), as well as further technical and business support with fellow innovators.

Haifa Al Kaylani said: "Innovate in the Agri-Food Sector was an important platform to support women's productivity in the agri-food sector in Lebanon and as President & Founder of the Arab International Women's Forum, I was proud to participate among a distinguished panel of judges and to hear the remarkable presentations of the finalists which we all found so deeply inspiring. I reiterate how proud we are at AIWF to be a longstanding partner of the World Bank in our shared mission to support and empower women and young people in the Arab world. In recent years, AIWF has also engaged closely with the FAO, the Center for Mediterranean Integration, and with Arab Ministries of Agriculture, as part of our Sustainability & STEM track, on initiatives that support innovation solutions to the food security and water scarcity challenges in the region, both of which intersect with the ongoing development issues of gender empowerment and youth unemployment."

The three winners were announced at the end of the session as: Pure Farms, Kawafungo, and Rivaland. AIWF extended its warmest congratulations to the exceptionally talented teams that participated and presented in the hackathon, and continues to support Berytech, the World Bank, and the FAO in its future programmes and all their remarkable work to support women in technology and entrepreneurship, in Lebanon and throughout the MENA Region.

## 4 AIWF Global Partnerships



In this reporting period (2021 – 2023), AIWF worked closely with Global Partners on a number of joint initiatives, conferences and events, including and beyond those featured in the previous section, laying the foundation for more specialised and microtargeted initiatives to be launched in the future in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on women and young people in the region.

As a non-profit, non-governmental organisation and NGO Member of the UN Global Compact, the Arab International Women's Forum proudly acknowledges the invaluable support of our Global Benefactor Partner PepsiCo and AIWF Global Corporate Partners Pfizer, and PwC, all Corporate Members of the UN Global Compact, on all our initiatives and international advocacy programmes made possible with their continued endorsement and confidence.

Over two decades AIWF has proudly collaborated with some of the world's leading institutions and organisations as Programme Partners on events, conferences and joint initiatives held in the UK, Europe, the United States and across the MENA Region, many of them both corporate and NGO Members of the UN Global Compact.

AIWF also partners with some of the world's leading universities on events and initiatives that link academia and the private sector to support the development of market-ready MENA graduates, foster women-led innovation and entrepreneurship, and nurture the next generation of young Arab business leaders. We are especially proud of our collaborations with universities that put young people at the heart of sustainable development in the Arab region, seeing this as an important contribution to our mission as NGO Members of the UN Global Compact.

## 5 About AIWF, a development organisation for women and young leaders in the MENA region and internationally

AIWF was founded in London in 2001 by Haifa Al Kaylani 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. Under Haifa's leadership, 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. AIWF celebrated its milestone 20th Anniversary in 2021.

From our base in London and from the heart of the MENA Region, AIWF convenes global and emerging leaders from government, public service, business, civil society, academia and media to create an Arab world where women are empowered to make a positive impact as equals and as leaders, in their communities, in grassroots advocacy, in parliament, in the economy, and in societal development overall.

Working closely with our Global Partners, collaboratively with our international institutional partners, and across cultures with our global member base, AIWF facilitates multi-stakeholder dialogue and drives action to help women and young leaders unlock their full potential and exercise their agency in the MENA Region through education, economic empowerment, and leadership development. We work to raise awareness and amplify emerging voices; shape an impactful agenda for women and youth; and drive collaborative action on sustainable development challenges.

On 01 January 2021, Haifa Al Kaylani was appointed President & Founder of AIWF and in March 2022, Mona Al Moayyed was appointed Chair of the newly formed AIWF Executive Committee, which has been tasked with steering AIWF's growing influence in the region and realising the vision of AIWF, which is to realise an Arab world where women, who are still greatly underrepresented and marginalised in MENA economic and political life, are empowered to make a positive impact as equals and as leaders, in their communities, in grassroots advocacy, in parliament, in the economy, and in societal development overall.

Find out more about AIWF's mission, history and programmes at [aiwfonline.com](https://aiwfonline.com).