



ARAB INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S FORUM

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

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

### *Introducing Arab Business Women to Investment Opportunities in France*

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

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

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

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

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

The conference included debates with field experts on a range of topics including Islamic finance, asset management, private sector growth, the Paris

marketplace, corporate real estate, research and innovation and competitiveness clusters. In endorsing the aim of the conference of moving "*From Partnership to Prosperity*" Minister Christine Lagarde stated "I would like to stress that the importance of your Forum goes beyond your role in the economy. You project a modern international image of the Arab woman."

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

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

Thierry Jacquillat, Chairman of the Greater Paris Investment Agency also expressed his confidence for the future when he said, "The presence here in Paris of such a large number of outstanding businesswomen gathered by the AIWF is the symbol of the confidence they have in the French economy and of the attractiveness of the French Capital Region."