



Press Release

For Immediate Release

A high-level conference highlighting pioneering studies showcasing the alarming reality of under representation of women in boards positions: only 5.3% of boards positions in Lebanese public institution and only 6.3% of women on boards of listed companies.

Beirut, Lebanon – In the occasion of the International Women’s Day, on March 12, 2025, the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) with the support of the British Embassy in Lebanon, hosted a conference in Beirut, bringing together 120 participants to discuss the Status of Women on Boards in Lebanon. This event marked a milestone in LLWB’s journey advocating for greater representation of women in boardrooms, with a particular focus on boards of directors in both the private mainly publicly listed companies and public sectors, public institutions. The conference featured additionally a panel discussion, along with the presentation of the two studies that contributed to the amendment of the Women on Boards draft Law, ensuring that the proposed changes were supported by updated evidence-based research.

The participants to the conference, were Ambassadors and Embassies to Lebanon representatives, Members of Parliament including H.E. Dr. Najat Aoun Saliba, H.E. Dr. Inaya Ezzedine, H.E. Dr. Ghada Ayoub, H.E. Dr. Halima Kaakour, and H.E. Mr. Firas Hamdan, and representative of UN Women, and UN agencies representatives, DG, Ministries and Directorates and public institutions representatives, International Organizations representatives, Universities representatives and Presidents, and key LLWB partners and head of NGOs and CSOs partners including syndicates and media representatives, as well as main LLWB experts and consultants who supported in developing the latest studies. The conference brought also together trailblazing women who are independent board members of various publicly listed companies, as well as the founders and advisors of LLWB, as well

as Women on Boards Committees members who were working on this initiative since its inception and launching in 2016.

The conference was launched by LLWB's Vice President and head of advocacy pillar, Ms. Abir Chebaro, who stated that *“with many public sector board vacancies opening, we have a unique opportunity to ensure that women's representation is no longer debated—it is implemented. The studies we have conducted will serve as a baseline to monitor and inform these appointments, holding institutions accountable for real progress.”* she continued, *“Together, we have built momentum.”* Her intervention was followed by the United Kingdom Embassy to Lebanon Chargée d’Affaires Ms. Victoria Dunne representing H.E. Hamish Cowell, who reaffirmed their commitment in supporting women rights issues in Lebanon.

The conference highlighted in its first part the successful engagement of the two universities LAU and AOU, in the program LLWB led during 8 months with the support of the UK embassy to Lebanon through the “Supporting Women On Boards of Syndicates, Universities and Organizations” project. In this framework, Dr. Yara Abdallah, Director General of Arab Open University (AOU), Dr. Salpie Djoundourian, representing the Lebanese American University (LAU) president, Ms. Carole Khater, Representing the Arab Institute for Women AIW at LAU, and Mr. Badri El Meouchi, representing the director general and dean of ESA Business School, tackled the impact of the project on upscaling the skills of women in the universities and from diverse sectors to be on various boards, and highlighted the roster of highly skilled women developed by LLWB over the years.

Then, the floor was given to the panel moderated by LLWB Executive Director Ms. Rita Chemaly in which, Me. Lara Saade, the Legal and Policy Expert presented the methodologies and main outcomes of two studies on Women on Boards, in Listed Companies and Women on Boards in Public Institutions in Lebanon developed by LLWB. Me Saade highlighted the alarming under representation of women occupying only 5.3% of boards positions in Lebanese public institution and only 6.3% of women on boards of listed companies. These pioneering studies could inform the appointment of women by the Government to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion is prioritized. Following the presentation, Dr. Zeina Zeidan, and Ms. Joelle Abou Farhat, Independent Board Members in Listed Companies, as well as Her Excellency, member of Parliament Dr. Najat Aoun Saliba, took the floor to share their lived experience and their insights to champion gender equality, and policy reforms to change the alarming reality. Mrs. Corine Kiame, LLWB



President, concluded the conference emphasizing LLWB's commitment to continued advocacy and participatory approach to refining the draft law.

A symbolic moment during the conference was the ringing of the bells to mark the beginning of a new chapter in Lebanon's journey toward gender equality in leadership. This was followed by the presentation of a draft law aimed at ensuring women's representation on boards of publicly listed companies. This draft law, developed by LLWB over several years, seeks to achieve at least 30% female representation on boards by 2030. The law was distributed to MPs and decision-makers at the end of the conference.

About LLWB

The Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) is dedicated to promoting gender equality in Lebanon's business and economic sectors. Through advocacy, research, and legislative reforms, LLWB strives to ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes across all sectors of society.