

January 11, 2010

Your Highnesses and Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all let me, on behalf of Dubai Women Establishment, welcome you all in the UAE and the 2nd Arab Women Leadership Forum, held under the patronage of H.H Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai and the support of H.H. Sheikha Manal Bint Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, President of Dubai Women Establishment, and wife of His Highness Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs.

I can still remember vividly when we decided two years ago to organize our first forum with the objective of changing stereotypical perceptions on "Women and Leadership". By that, we started the thousand mile walk which encountered many learning and networking experiences which eliminated many misconceptions regarding this part of the world.

Last year's forum embraced an intellectual content that focused on women and leadership, and the creative aspects of our local experience and global impact. This year, we will tackle another strategic focus on the agenda of Dubai Women Establishment which is Work-life balance. Choosing the theme for this year stems from our commitment to the establishment's agenda, and gaining the support of decision makers on various levels especially under the current economic circumstances. Since work life balance is an issue worldwide, we hope to learn from the best practices and research results done in many countries aiming at providing alternative solutions regarding public and organizational policies that serve women and strengthen their position in the work environment.

In the end, I would like to deeply thank:

Our knowledge Partner: the Gender and Public Policy Program of Dubai School of Government for enriching our forum over these two years in a devoted and committed partnership to benefit community service and knowledge seekers especially in matters related to gender and leadership.

Our Official Media Partner: Dubai Media Incorporated which employed all its entities and media tools to assist the forum since its inception.

Platinum Sponsor: Emirates Integrated Telecommunication Company "du", for believing in the importance of supporting all that may help improve corporate practices especially those pertaining to women and leadership, as well as its support to the forum.

Golden Sponsor: Ahmed Sadiqi and Sons, whose participation constitutes a special support to Dubai Women Establishment which we hope to continue for years to come.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We hope our forum agenda gets your satisfaction and enrich your eagerness for knowledge and your desire to learn from the experiences of others.

Once again, Good evening all and welcome to the UAE!