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***First-of-its-kind research in the region to reveal insights on diversity and inclusion in the workplace***

*Pearl Initiative and NAMA officially release Women in the Economy: The Gulf Region Outlook*

Key Takeaways:

* The first-of-its-kind report in the region will help build stronger and more supportive policies to create workplace diversity
* Organisations can do more to support women in the workforce for their career success
* Positive tone from the top leaders and management can help women in the workforce
* Call for regional organisations to incorporate the feedback of their employees in order to create impactful change for improved business outcomes

***United Arab Emirates (UAE), 06 July 2020****:* The Pearl Initiative, the region’s only non-profit organisation promoting a corporate culture of accountability and transparency across the Gulf Region’s private sector, and NAMA Women Advancement Establishment (NAMA) have announced the launch of their latest *Thought Leadership Report, titled* ***Women in the Economy: The Gulf Region Outlook****.* The report provides a thorough synopsis of the latest insights on women’s experiences in the workplace, as well as how both genders differently interpret workplace support mechanisms and what women are looking for in a supportive and encouraging work environment.

The report sheds light on the impact of adopting a positive tone from the top to promote women in the workforce as a common denominator for the active support and development of women’s careers. One of the important findings from the report reveals that 79% of the participants say their organisational leadership is actively trying to empower and promote women, while 77% of the participants believe women and men are afforded the same benefits and facilities. The report also discloses key factors identified by participants that can support women in the workforce:

* 60% of respondents want an improved organizational culture supporting women
* 57% want increased leadership commitment to women’s workforce engagement
* 46% want better recruitment opportunities for women

Organisations can build stronger and more supportive policies to create diverse and inclusive workplaces, as well as to create mechanisms in offices which support women’s inclusion, career progression, training, mentorship, and success.

**Reem BinKaram, Director, NAMA Women’s Advancement Establishment**, said, “Women’s meaningful inclusion in the workplace requires an evidence-based approach in order to achieve concrete results. The creation of equitable societies and workplaces for women is at the core of NAMA’s efforts, and we are proud to have launched this pioneering regionwide study and achieved this milestone together with our valuable partner, The Pearl Initiative, in fulfilling our shared goal of achieving diversity and inclusion in the workplace.”

PwC, a champion of diversity and inclusion, supported in the data parsing for Women in the Economy: The Gulf Region Outlook Report.

**Norma Taki, Diversity and Inclusion Leader at PwC Middle East**, says, “Diversity and inclusion is one of our strategic priorities at PwC Middle East, we are committed to the advancement of this agenda in the communities we operate in. According to our [‘Women in Work - Insights from MENA’](https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/publications/documents/women-in-work-index.pdf), diversity has been found to improve financial performance, breed creativity and innovation, and is an integral factor in navigating the digital revolution.”

“Collaborating with the Pearl Initiative on this report has supported our perspective of the ongoing dialogue on diversity and our partnership is a testament to that. We are confident that more work in this space will drive action for the change we aspire to achieve across the region.”

**Yasmine Omari, Executive Director of the Pearl Initiative**, said, “When we look at the future, we see diversity and inclusion for women across the board. Our expertise lies in our ability to produce novel and contemporary research based on the region’s business trends and needs. The aim of this first-of-a-kind report in the region is to boost the community by providing a valuable source of insightful data to emphasize the business case for a diverse and inclusive work environment. We strongly believe that diversity is a pillar of good corporate governance and this is the reason we launched the DIBL programme back in 2014.”

“The report wouldn’t have been possible without the support of our long-term partner and supporter of the DIBL programme, NAMA Women Advancement Establishment. We would also like to thank our partners PwC as a supporter of the DIBL research as well as advising on the business case for diversity.”

Founded in 2010, the Pearl Initiative is a business–led non-profit organisation promoting a corporate culture of accountability and transparency as key drivers of competitiveness and sustainable economic growth across the Gulf Region. The organisation develops programmes and publishes regional research reports and case studies to promote the implementation of higher standards of corporate governance amongst business and student communities across the Gulf Region.

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To download the report in English, please click this link: <https://www.pearlinitiative.org/pi_admin/publications/viewenpdf?filename=article-20200706085632.pdf>

To download the report in Arabic, please click this link: <https://www.pearlinitiative.org/pi_admin/publications/viewarpdf?filename=article-20200706085632.pdf>

**Notes to editors:**

The survey, which was conducted in May 2019, was spread across the GCC countries and 11 industry sectors with over 280 respondents offering their insights from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait.

The survey and report, both part of Pearl Initiative’s [Diversity in Business Leadership (DIBL) programme](https://www.pearlinitiative.org/programmes/diversity-in-business-leadership), was launched in 2014 and is currently run in partnership with NAMA Women Advancement Establishment. The [Key Findings infographic](https://www.pearlinitiative.org/pi_admin/publications/viewenpdf?filename=article-20191211061201.pdf) detailing the core outcomes of the survey was [previously launched at the Women’s Economic Empowerment Global Summit](https://www.pearlinitiative.org/events/event/summary/127), organized by UN Women and NAMA in December 2019. These results were used to create a series of workshops that offered concrete solutions for employers and employees alike to build a cohesive and inclusive workplace.

**NAMA Women Advancement Establishment (NAMA)**

NAMA Women Advancement Establishment (NAMA) was founded in 2015 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Member of the UAE Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, and is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al Qasimi, Wife of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah.

 At NAMA, we are determined to mobilize the means required to create enabling environments to advance gender equity and inclusive economic and social growth. NAMA’s efforts stem from its core philosophy that women advancement is a fundamental requirement for the sustainable development of nations.

Through its three affiliates; Sharjah Business Women Council, Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council, and Badiri Education and Development Academy, NAMA designs and implements initiatives that support women across the economic, professional and social sectors.

NAMA also engages with grass-roots and international organisations as part of its comprehensive approach towards developing an ecosystem in which women’s full potential is realized.

For more information, visit [www.namawomen.ae](http://www.namawomen.ae)

***About the Pearl Initiative***

Prominent business leaders from across the Gulf Region formed the Pearl Initiative in 2010 to create a non-profit vehicle for the Private Sector to collectively take the lead in adopting higher standards in corporate governance, accountability and transparency to enhance business innovation, opportunity and value creation.

With over 40 regional and international partners, the Pearl Initiative brings together business, government and civil society decision-makers to share best business practices and to help maximise the economic opportunities available to companies within the region. The Pearl Initiative also supports Gulf-based university students to identify and embrace strong ethics as they embark on their future careers.

The Pearl Initiative seeks joint collaborative action between regional and global business leaders, international institutions, government bodies and wider initiatives within the Gulf Region, exhibiting positive leadership and sharing knowledge and experience in order to influence regional business and student communities.

For more information, please visit www.pearlinitiative.org or contact us on +971 6 779 2672 or via email at enquiries@pearlinitiative.org.

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