

Theme: “Strategy for Women’s Initiative in Economy or Business ”

Elizabeth Benham – President International Federation of Business and professional Women (BPW International)

KONNI CHI WA

Good morning everyone and welcome to the first Plenary Session for day two of the 2010 APEC WLN meeting. It is my great pleasure to be the facilitator of this session. This morning, I am delighted to say that our affiliate from Business and Professional Women of Japan, have put together an esteemed panel to share their views on:

“Strategy for Women’s Initiative in Economy or Business ”

This morning’s session will be in four parts. First, we will hear from our leaders; Second we will open the floor to you the delegates to hear your thoughts and comments. The third part will be a general discussion with our panellists on the main themes arising and fourth the aspects of our discussion will be considered in the drafting of the WLN Recommendations that will conclude this WLN meeting.

So let me begin this session with the words of former US First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, who said:

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams,”

Thousands of women in APEC Economies have done just that – they now head small and large businesses that make a substantial contribution to GDP in each economy and the region as a whole, but women’s share of the market is still relatively low and we are a long way from achieving “gender diverse” markets.

Much work remains to be done to address the gender challenges on trade & business practices to support women in the workplace, marketplace and the community. Empowering women to develop their full potential in the knowledge society and participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential for sustainable development, improved productivity for and by women and to build strong economies.

We have heard about some key initiatives such as the Women’s Empowerment Principles and the Road Map to 2020 which is being opened for the APEC region to engage in. Also in Chongqing, China one week ago the Chongqing Platform for Action on Sourcing from Women Vendors was launched with the ITC (International Trade Center) and other private and government stake holders.

The views of our panellists today is representative of **Business, Government and Academia** and they will talk about their challenges to develop careers and leadership in their field All of them are top leaders and they are :

- Two leading business women - Ms. Kimie Iwata, Executive Vice President, Representative Director, SHISEIDO Co., Ltd. Japan, and also a woman that needs no introduction after her powerful address before the tea break, Ms. Nicole Hollows, CEO & Managing Director, Macarthur Coal Ltd Australia.
- We are delighted to be joined by one of the founders of the Women's Leaders Network and a leader of academia in the Philippines, Dr. Amelou Benitez, - Dr Benitez is President, National Council of Women and trustee of the Philippine Women's University.
- Before serving the City of Yokohama, Ms. Fumiko Hayashi was selected as one of Fortune Magazine's "50 Most Powerful Women in International Business in 2008". Today, Ms Hayashi is Mayor of Japan's second largest city - the City of Yokohama, which is home to many citizens of foreign nationalities from around the world.
- And we are thrilled to have the first Asian New Zealander to win an electorate, the Honorable Pansy Wong of New Zealand - Minister for Women's and Ethnic Affairs completing our impressive line up this morning **Welcome ladies!**

I'd like to begin our discussion with a question to:

Ms. Kimie Iwata as the Vice President of a major cosmetics company, how will your company address fostering the careers and leadership of women in corporations? <RESPONSE>

Pansy Wong, as Minister for Women's and Ethnic Affairs in New Zealand, creating new economic opportunities for women is one of your main priorities. How are women in New Zealand contributing to being the key economic drivers to lead the economy in potential growth areas such as international trade and SMEs and more importantly, what is your economy doing to address this? <RESPONSE>

Dr Benitez, capacity building in education and training is important to advance and support women's career development. What are your insights into some of the policy directions and

strategies to integrate women into business and the economy? And is Womenomics as a strategy, the key to women's empowerment? <RESPONSE>

Mayor Hayashi San, it is important that we find ways to accelerate Women's participation in management (and in decision-making processes). What do you identify as the key components to advance Women's participation in management? <RESPONSE>

Nicole, I'd like to keep with this discussion on Women's participation in management and at the board level. Thank you for your earlier insights and overview on women in business in Australia – there is some real momentum that is building around diversity in your country!

In your opinion, what is the one core quality that women need to advance as CEOs or leaders? <RESPONSE>

PART 2

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

Well, we have just heard from our expert panel and now, we'd like to hear from you - the audience – we'd like to **hear your views** from what has been presented or your comments on **what can be done to promote more active participation of women in business and the economy.** We hope that discussions will contribute to the APEC WLN Recommendations .We also welcome any questions you may have at this time.

Clearly state for the panel and delegates:

Your **Name, Organisation, Country** and your **Comment.**

You all have two minutes before the Time Out sign <QUESTIONS/COMMENTS> **30 min**

PART 3

In picking up from some of the comments raised from the floor.... I'd like to ask each of our panellists what is their key message in order to promote the advancement or leadership of women's participation in business and the economy.

It has often been said that 'Investing in women is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.'

Nicole, I was interested to hear your journey as a CEO and you discussed the importance of agility. Do you think that this is inherent in women and if not, what can we as women do to foster CEO/Leadership skills? <RESPONSE>

Mayor Hayashi –San We heard yesterday from your Minister for Gender Equality, Ms Tomiko Okazaki about the Japanese “M” curve and that there are still many women who discontinue their work and careers during the period of marriage, child birth and child care. How does this affect the economy of Yokohama City and what incentives does your city have in place to entice more women back into the workforce and still retain a work life balance? < RESPONSE>

Dr. Benitez as a top leader of women’s education, what do you propose for the continuing advancement of women? <RESPONSE>

Minister Wong how would you advise women to empower themselves for high level decision making roles? <RESPONSE>

Iwata- San

When it comes to Improvement of the working environment what do you see as some of the key challenges for women that need to be addressed? <RESPONSE>

.....A perfect opening into the Women’s Empowerment Principles which were mentioned by our keynote speaker yesterday Dr Moez Doraid and strongly endorsed by the Plenary Session on the Role of the WLN and New Challenges, which was led by Andrina Lever.

For those who may not be familiar with the 7 principles, here they are: Slide On Screen
Copies of the Women’s Empowerment Principles will also be available on the website.

PART 4

Panellists ,what final message would each of you like to give the delegates on our topic of addressing the challenges for women in business and the economy? And I would like to ask each of you, which of the 7 Women’s Empowerment Principles resonate the most with you and how can you utilize them when you return to your economy?

CONCLUSION:

Our panellists have insightfully considered some of the challenges for women in Business and the Economy and the conclusion that we draw from this morning's plenary is that in creating new economic opportunities for women, career development must be addressed along with the realisation that women's talent's should be fully utilised to lead our economies in areas of international trade and SMEs. We need tools that will create more enabling environments to implement actions. We need to engender under-tapped resources.

The 'multiplier effect' of women's empowerment has been increasingly acknowledged. What is powerful and new today is that the business community itself reports that gender equality is good for business. It advances innovation, attracts top talent, raises positive consumer and community recognition and improves profits. The Women's Empowerment Principles build on this business case also. We know that the Women's Empowerment Principles are a strong and actionable tool to advance women's opportunities, inclusion and leadership in business and the economy and they work for Business, Government and Academia!

There is an identified need for more women being included in decision-making positions and on company boards. Women's full participation is key to the **growth of economies**. We need to measure what women are contributing as key economic drivers in APEC economies in growth areas such as international trade and SMEs.

We can no longer depend on women for their domestic skills only!

It's time for a universal framework to empower women in the workplace and, by extension, in all areas of their lives by changing a predominantly male-oriented way of thinking. We need an Inclusive Policy framework for the 21st Century. We need **innovation** for APEC and innovation requires new, unique ideas—and the best ideas flourish in a diverse environment. This is **exactly** the moment to send the clear message to APEC Ministers that now is the time for women's advancement and economic empowerment in all APEC economies.

Let's make it happen!!!!

<ENDS>

As we end this session, I would like to recognise the President of Business and Professional Women (BPW) Japan, Toshimi Matsubara and all the hard working BPW Japan members for their support of the WLN and in organising this session; this includes our past president of BPW Japan and enthusiastic MC - Masako Hiramatsu.

Please also give a big applause to thank the THE PANELLISTS.

And lastly, we extend many thanks to the WLN Organising Committee:

Elizabeth Benham.