



GCC Chapter News



Edition 1, June 2016

The 30% Club GCC Chapter is delighted to introduce our very first quarterly newsletter. Each edition of the newsletter will feature highlights of the Chapter's activities as well as offer insights into behind-the-scene happenings.

This inaugural newsletter gives a comprehensive overview of our journey to influence the thinking and behavior of business leaders in the Middle East on the business case for greater diversity at senior levels, since the launch of the GCC Chapter in November 2015.

GCC Chapter launch

The launch of our regional Chapter was celebrated on 11 November 2015 at a special event hosted by the Capital Club at DIFC in Dubai. The launch event was attended by prominent business leaders and members of GCC royalty, including Keynote Speaker **Sheikha Hanadi Al Thani**. The room bustled with more than 170 guests and supporters, all of whom share the belief that better gender balance on boards is better for business.



Highlights



Helping to lead debates in the UAE

In February 2016, **Farah Foustok**, CEO, Lazard Gulf Ltd and Co-founder of the 30% Club GCC Chapter spoke at a panel discussion hosted by the French Business Council. Themed **Workforce Diversity in the UAE: Challenges and Opportunities**, the discussion featured views from leading global players including Ernst & Young, DHL and Accor hotels.

Contributing to discussions outside the UAE borders

We were tapped by the Pearl Initiative and Nasser Bin Khaled Group to participate in their joint Diversity in Leadership event hosted in Doha, Qatar on 9 March 2016. The Forum was attended by approximately 50 executives from public and private companies, family firms, academia, state-owned entities and semi-government bodies in Qatar.

The panel featured Aysha Al Mudahka, CEO, Qatar Business Incubation Center; Wadih AbouNasr, Senior Partner, PwC Qatar; and Farah Foustok, Co-founder of the 30% Club GCC Chapter. If you are interested in learning more about discussions at this successful event, you can read the [Session Outcome Report](#).

Inspiring Women in Finance

In February 2016, Managing Partner of TVM Capital Healthcare Partners and Chair Member of 30% GCC Chapter **Hoda Abou-Jamra** took part in a panel discussion hosted by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) with the theme **Leading the Change: Increasing Gender Diversity to boost Performance**. The panel was hosted to deliver exclusive insights from diversity experts and successful business leaders in organisations that are changing the game by making gender diversity a strategic business imperative. More than 60 Chief Financial Officers attended the event.

Empowering Women in Technology

Representatives from the 30% Club GCC Chapter were also present at the UAE edition of Cisco's global annual event **Be Unstoppable**. Held at Cisco's Dubai offices on March 10th, 2016, the event featured eminent women speakers including thought leaders and entrepreneurs from the fields of education, business, IT and sports. The keynote presentation was delivered by **Farah Foustok**, Co-founder of the 30% Club GCC Chapter who also participated in an engaging panel discussion that included speakers such as Mike Weston, VP Middle East, Cisco; Marie Pearson, CEO, Grow-M; Dr. Sana Odeh, Professor of Computer Science, NYU Abu Dhabi, and UAE Strongest Woman and Rosamund Marshall, CEO, Taaleem.

Shaking hands with the Institute of Corporate Governance

Our collaboration with Hawkamah, the Institute for Corporate Governance was formally announced at their Corporate Governance Forum, which was held in Dubai Financial Market on the 8th of May, 2016. The 30% Club GCC has joined forces with Hawkamah to encourage men and women to complete Hawkamah's Director Development Programme. Special places will be made available to women candidates from organisations who have members in the 30% GCC Chapter.



Celebrating International Women's Day in the UAE

In honour of International Women's Day, the CBD Now and British Business Group jointly hosted an interactive business breakfast in the UAE with the theme **Pledge for Parity – Accelerating Equality in the Middle East**. Director, Strategy and Corporate Affairs – MENA and India, CH2M and Steering Committee Member of the 30% Club GCC Chapter, **Raeda Al Sarayreh** delivered an inspirational talk on the ways organisations can promote women and tackle gender bias. The event also featured a panel discussion on Gender Diversity where **Lubna Qassim**, Executive Vice President, Group General Counsel & Company Secretary, Emirates NBD and Chair Member of our GCC Chapter participated as a panelist. Lubna spoke on the role of the 30% Club GCC Chapter in accelerating women in senior roles in the GCC.

Teaming up with Deloitte to conduct research

With businesses in the GCC facing pressing challenges, including oil prices, the issue of gender balance at board level is not a priority in the present climate. This and other revelations are among the findings of our joint study with Deloitte entitled **View from the top: What business executives really think about women leaders in the GCC**. A diverse sample of c-suite business leaders across the GCC countries, both male and female, nationals and expatriates, from the public and private sectors, participated in the study. In addition to looking at the topic of women's representation on boards in the GCC, the report presents findings from participants on issues such as whether implementing a quota system to achieve gender balance would be effective, what kinds of barriers or bias exist to prevent women from achieving executive positions, and whether a cultural shift is taking place in the region that is changing the dynamics of women's progression to senior roles. To access the full report, [visit our website](#).

Powering Arabian Business Forum on gender diversity

Our GCC Chapter was honoured to be associated with the 13th Arabian Business Forum being held in Dubai on the 24th of May. Hosted by BBC journalist and ITP chairman Andrew Neil, the theme for this Forum was: **A missed opportunity: Why the Gulf needs more female business leaders**. Founding Chair of the GCC Chapter of the 30% Club, **Lubna Qassim** opened the conference with a keynote speech on diversity and the 30% Club GCC Chapter. **Ghassan Turqieh**, Consulting Partner and human capital leader at Deloitte in the Middle East discussed key findings of Other eminent speakers from the 30% Club GCC included **Hoda Abou Jamra**, Founding Partner, TVM Capital Healthcare Partners and **Catherine Beckett**, Partner, Dentons, among other to discuss an array of topics including how to encourage greater female entrepreneurship in the Gulf.

What's on

2016	June	September	October	November	December
Media/Events		Mentoring & Education		1 st Anniversary Event	Women & Media Event
Meetings	International Chapters Meeting (23)	Steering Committee Meeting		Steering Committee Meeting	
Search		Database of Board-ready Women	Pledge/Code		

Stemming from the belief that having women on boards and in senior positions is good for business, over 60 regional and multinational firms have voluntarily come on board to support the purpose of the 30% Club GCC Chapter in making the business case for increasing female participation across organizations.

Regional firms or volunteers interested to support the 30% Club GCC Chapter are encouraged to contact Samantha King at samantha.king@bnymellon.com to express their interest in coming on board.

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