

Meeting of Top Leaders in Accountancy A Policy Dialogue for Advancing Women in Leadership Positions

In a pivotal initiative aimed at empowering and elevating women accountants in leadership roles, the SAFA Women Leadership Committee launched a global effort. On **October 12, 2023**, a virtual meeting engaged representatives from IFAC and 17 Professional Accountancy Organizations (PAOs). The objective was to collectively address challenges, exchange best practices, and devise a comprehensive strategy to boost the prominence of women accountants in leadership positions.

Jahanara Sajjad Ahmad, who conducted the proceedings as the master of ceremonies, welcomed all the participants and established the context for the fruitful dialogue.

The event commenced with a warm welcome from Hina Usmani, Chairperson, SAFA Women Leadership Committee. Her address emphasized the significance of this gathering. Following this, CA. Nihar N Jambusaria, President SAFA, delivered the opening speech, effectively setting the meeting for the enlightening discussions that were to follow.

Chamila Cooray, Vice Chair, SAFA Women Leadership Committee, presented a comprehensive overview of the current statistics pertaining to women in SAFA countries. Her presentation indicated a gradual increase in the percentage of women intake but at the same time identified the alarming low number of qualified women as compared to men in the same period. She highlighted the need for material efforts for addressing relevant causes and taking necessary actions.

Subsequently, the event transitioned into group discussions, where participants were organized into groups to delve into a set of predefined questions. Each group lead summarized and presented their key takeaways from the discussions, providing invaluable insights from their respective groups. Then all participants deliberated on the combined outcomes as shared by the group leads.

Heshana Kuruppu, Vice President SAFA, presented the consolidated key takeaways that emerged from the group discussions. He shared that the strategies include making career aspirations a collective dream, using technology effectively, and emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion. The action plans involve initiating change within institutions, recognizing achievements, and addressing stereotypes related to women in leadership.

In his closing remarks, CA. Nihar N Jambusaria underscored the significance of the discussions and their potential impact on the future of women's leadership roles. He encouraged the participants to take necessary action at institutional level as well advocate with respective governments in areas where policy decisions are necessary for achieving the shared objectives. He also emphasized the importance of these discussions, acknowledged the challenges and opportunities, and reaffirmed SAFA's commitment for such initiatives.

Hina Usmani, extended her heartfelt vote of thanks to all participants and advised that SAFA WLC will be hosting this dialogue annually to review the actions taken by the respective institutional participants and will expand its reach to other stakeholders. She anticipated that this regular engagement will yield significant impact through combined actions.

The meeting represented a momentous occasion, providing a platform for accomplished individuals to share their experiences and insights. It marked a significant step toward enhancing the prominence of women in leadership roles within the accountancy profession.

During the course of the meeting, compelling discussions resulted in the creation of a policy paper, which was based on the key takeaways shared by the participants.

Post meeting actions: The key takeaways have been shared with all participating institutions with a request for necessary actions at institutional level as well to advocate with respective governments in areas where policy decisions are necessary for achieving the shared objectives. Participation certificates have also been issued as token of appreciation to all institutional representatives.

The list of participating institutions with names of representatives is appended below:

Respected Participant	Nominating Institution
Abdur Rahman Khan	The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh
Akhtar Sanjida Kasem	The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh
Amanda Gallagher	AICPA & CIMA
Angela Lunn CA	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
Arslan Khalid	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan
Asad Feroze	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan
Chamila Cooray	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka
Chittaranjan Chattopadhyay	The Institute of Cost Accountants of India
Darshini Watawala	The Institute of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka
Fareeha Shareef	Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Maldives
Fouzia Haque	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh
Hayley Angell	Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand
Helen Partridge	International Federation of Accountants
Khursheed Kotwal	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan
Manyara Chigunduru	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Zimbabwe
Maria Howalder	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh
Meera Shrestha	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal
Parvathy Venkatesh	The Institute of Cost Accountants of India
Patricia Stock	The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants
Pratima Ghimire	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal
Samia Ashraf Bhatti	The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan
Shehzad Ahmed Malik	The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan
Vandana Saxena Poria	The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales



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Thursday | 12 October, 2023 | 4:00pm to 7:00pm (PST) | VIRTUAL

