

## **WDM and HSBC Malta host company leaders and aspiring female directors**

Chairpersons and CEOs of a number of Malta's listed companies were invited together with a group of talented women who have an aspiration to become company directors to a networking event organised by Women Directors Malta (WDM). Supported by HSBC Bank Malta, following their recent partnership with WDM, the event was held at the Malta Chamber of Commerce in Valletta.

Dr Michelle Gialanze, president of Women Directors in Malta, explained that the objective of the event was to provide an opportunity for aspiring directors and company leaders to get to know each other better. WDM exists to help capable women make the right connections and to get to board level within their own company, or to take on a non-executive board role and other board level roles in all sectors. As a non-profit voluntary organisation, WDM helps to bridge the gap. "One of our main aims is to increase the presence of meritorious women on the boards of locally listed companies. This is an issue that cannot be ignored anymore." She encouraged talented women to approach WDM for networking, training, and advancement opportunities.

HSBC chairman Mr Sonny Portelli said: "Building strong and diverse boards is a key priority for those of us that have the privilege to lead the country's largest companies." He shared with the audience the bank's commitment in the context of gender balance increasingly becoming a leadership challenge. "We see a more inclusive organisation develop as we move forward into the future. The board of HSBC Malta has two female directors while another two women sit on each of the boards of HSBC Life Insurance Company and HSBC Global Asset Management Company. We are proud of the progress we have made but the job is not yet done and we are committed to continue to improve diversity at the Board and Executive level".

Medserv plc chairman Mr Anthony S. Diacono highlighted the fact that, even in the male dominated oil and gas industry, women are today occupying directorships and CEO positions. "Notwithstanding the challenges, some of these companies are performing better than companies with men-only boards. These professional women add value not because they are female but because they are competent. These female professionals are proof that balance between work and family responsibility may be achieved. And this despite the unfortunate truth that the female still carries the major burden of family responsibility. This reality translates itself to another fact; females deliver the results because they strive harder."

HSBC Malta's CEO Andrew Beane said: "In today's world it is no-longer acceptable that gender is a barrier to progression. Gender-diverse boards and management teams encourage a richness of thinking and different perspectives that support better decision making and business outcomes. This is about meritocracy and we must recognise that it is companies that have to change, not the talented women who wish to build careers within them. I urge the CEOs of all of Malta's large businesses to join me in taking personal accountability to lead this.'

During the evening, WDM members networked with Mr Michael Warrington from AX Holdings Group, Mr Frederick Mifsud Bonnici, who is a director on a number of company boards, Ms Antoinette Caruana from Simonds Farsons Cisk plc, and Mr Edmond Gatt Baldacchino from United Finance plc, and with the above mentioned speakers.

# Press Release



**HSBC Malta chairman Mr Sonny Portelli addressing the WDM event**

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