

FICCI and UN Women sign MoU to advance gender equality and women empowerment

New Delhi, 15 December 2015: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and UN Women Multi Country Office for India, Bhutan, Maldives & Sri Lanka have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi to strengthen collaboration on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the business sector. The strategic partnership between the two organizations will help to achieve the common goal of realizing the rights of women and girls as critical preconditions for effective and sustainable development.

Dr. Rebecca Tavares, Country Representative, UN Women India MCO and Dr. Jyotsna Suri, President FICCI who is also the Chairperson & Managing Director of Bharat Hotels signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organisations.

On this occasion, **Dr. Jyotsna Suri noted** that "FICCI is upbeat about its partnership with UN Women. This MoU will enable us to identify, facilitate and influence business practices that promote gender equality and women empowerment, the two vital components for advancing development and enhancing representation of women across all sectors and levels of economic activity".

Dr. Tavares also complemented that by saying the strengthened partnership would provide a strategic platform to both organizations' to leverage their comparative advantages in furthering progress on shared goals to contribute to transformative changes for women in the private sector.

"The new Sustainable Development Goals, which are expected to shape policies and social investments for the next generation, strongly emphasize the role of the private sector in the implementation of the Goals. Our agreement here today is in line with that vision," she said, noting that the agreement will set an example for businesses and motivate them to prioritize equal opportunities and representation of women in all layers of management, supply chains, and markets, right up to the boardroom.

The strategic partnership between FICCI and UN Women is another significant step towards advancing equal opportunities and rights for women in the workplace, marketplace and communities. As a step forward in this partnership, UN Women will be collaborating with FICCI for the first ever FICCI-FLO Film Festival on women's empowerment along with a Global Symposium on 'Gender in Media' presented by the Geena Davis Institute of Gender Studies in Mumbai in February next year.

Through this partnership UN Women and FICCI will also work towards furthering UN Women's global solidarity movement on Gender Equality – "HeForShe". HeForShe invites men and boys

as equal partners in the crafting and implementing of a shared vision of gender equality that will benefit all of humanity. Since the campaign's launch at the United Nations, September 20th, 2015, by Honorable Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the 69th session of the General Assembly, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson, hundreds of thousands of men from around the world including Heads of State, CEOs, celebrities, and global luminaries have committed their voices to gender equality.

UN Women and FICCI will together look at creating HeForShe Corporate Partners who will have very high reputations for strong ethical practices and equitable gender policies; demonstrate global excellence in their field of business; offer a global reach with a broad information distribution channel that they are prepared to bring to the campaign; and commit their expertise and other corporate resources to end gender inequality.

The MoU will provide a framework to both the organisations, to promote research and advocacy on gender responsive policies in select sectors. It will also ensure capacity building of women professionals enabling them to assume leadership roles in line with the provisions of the recent Companies Act 2013.

This proposed collaboration between UN Women and FICCI, the largest and oldest apex business organization in India will inform policy of India's businesses and industries to design and implement gender responsive practices. As a growing effort by UN women to strengthen collaboration with the business sector UN women hopes to expand its outreach within the industry and acknowledge the role of this sector as an important stakeholder in development and economic growth.

FICCI MEDIA DIVISION