

# UN forum closes in Bahrain with the spotlight on entrepreneurs for sustainable development

2 November 2017 – A United Nations forum on sustainable development concluded today in Bahrain with a strong call for the integration of entrepreneurship and innovation in all economic and social dimensions as key strategies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

In particular, the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum (WEIF) 2017 – having over 60 per cent of participants women – underscored the importance of the role of female entrepreneurs.

We recommend for the active involvement of women in all sectors related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through entrepreneurship and innovation, read the World Forum’s outcome declaration / communique.

The World Forum also called upon governments, the private sector, academia, civil society, media and international organizations to facilitate the work of entrepreneurs and innovators to ensure sustainable development.

Speaking at a press conference where the outcome – Manama Declaration – was unveiled, Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, also highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation for the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

We must offer better incentives to induce entrepreneurs and innovators to invest in [SDGs](#) [to] unleash and foster a dynamic private sector and ensure competitiveness, he said, noting, in particular, the role of small and medium sized-enterprises, which often account for the majority of business activities at the national level.

Helping businesses get off the ground and sustaining them through their initial phases helps generate employment, income and economic growth  
President of General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák

Supporting [these enterprises] is a proven strategy to build a robust economy from the ground up [and] helping businesses get off the ground and sustaining them through their initial phases helps generate employment, income and economic growth, added Mr. Lajčák.

Further in his remarks, the President of the General Assembly highlighted the importance of the means of implementation for sustainable development, and called innovative partnerships between all sectors.

In that context, Mr. Lajčák noted that, in mid-2018, he will be convening a high-level event on sustainable development financing to foster discussions

among UN Member States and other stakeholders on the important subject.

Organized under the overarching theme of [\*achieving the SDGs through promoting entrepreneurship and innovation\*](#), the World Forum saw participation of more than 1,000 government officials, entrepreneurs, representatives of international organizations, civil society and the academia from over 90 countries.



Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, speaks at the Press Conference. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



Hashim Hussein, the head of the UNIDO ITPO-Bahrain, briefs on the outcomes of WEIF 2017. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, receives a commemorative plaque from the organizers of WEIF. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



A participant at the press conference broadcasts the event live on Facebook. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



Participants at the Press Conference, held at UN House, Manama, Bahrain. Photo: UNIC-Manama

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Briefing on the World Forum's discussions and outcomes, Hashim Hussein, the Executive Secretary of WEIF 2017 and the head of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Investment and Technology Promotion Office (ITPO) in Bahrain, noted that participants stressed the need to build and strengthen partnerships between entrepreneurs &#8211 both women and men alike.

&#8220[The World Forum] urged stakeholders to foster the private sector as the main engine behind economic growth, structural change and innovation [and] identified the pressing need to promote competitive micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as the main driving force for empowerment of women and youth,&#8221 said Mr. Hussein.

In his remarks, the head of UNIDO ITPO-Bahrain also underscored the importance of sound economic policies, legislation and programmes &#8211 as key elements of sustainable development &#8211 to ensure the empowerment of women at the national, regional and global levels.

Also at the press conference, Samir Aldarabi, the Director of the [UN Information Centre in Manama](#), [recalled](#) the message of UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres to the Forum, in which the Secretary-General said that inclusive and sustainable industrial development will continue to be a key driver of progress as [the United Nations] supports Member States in this essential work.

Looking ahead, Mr. Aldarabi informed that the World Forum will be held every two years in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, and that in 2020 [it will be organized](#) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Also speaking at the occasion were the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Bahrain, Amin El Sharkawi; and the Under Secretary for International Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

Organized by UNIDO in partnership with the Government of Bahrain, the World Entrepreneurs and Investment Forum 2017, held from 31 October to 2 November, saw key events on the [Maritime-Continental Silk Road](#); [addressing challenges faced by women in industry](#); global impact investing; [recognition](#) of men and women business leaders for their contributions to sustainable development; the [Bahrain Entrepreneurs Exhibition](#); and a side event on implementation of SDGs in Bahrain.

*UN News was in Manama, Bahrain, covering the Forum and its associated events. Follow [@UN\\_News\\_Centre](#) and [@UNNewsArabic](#) for up to date news and highlights from the UN.*