

## SCWEC Women's Business Conference

The SCWEC Women Business Conference was organized by SCCI in collaboration with SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC) and in partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) on June 28, 2022, at Marriott Hotel, Islamabad, Pakistan, under the theme “Building Future: Women entrepreneurship and sustainable development shaping the New Normal”.

The objective of the conference was to discuss the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and identify solutions and recommendations for change, promote the development of emerging women entrepreneur networks in Pakistan and map the way to success and equality and discuss the digitalization of business activities in the new normal and to identify ways of leveraging e-commerce for women-led businesses in Pakistan.

The conference comprised three sessions which were chaired by renowned mentors, Ms. Sahibzadi Mahin Khan, Ms. Urooj Mansab Khan, and Ms. Zubia Zubair. The speakers included Ms. Fareeha Ummer, Portfolio Manager, UN Women, Dr. Rakhshanda Perveen, Founder and CEO, Kafe Kaam, Ms. Habiba Siddiqui, Director, Afghanistan Green Future Organization, Afghanistan, Ms. Archana Bhatnagar, President Madhya Pradesh Association of Women Entrepreneurs, Jabalpur, India, Dr. Farzana, Group Chairperson, City Schools Pakistan, Ms. Sarojani Sherchan, Vice Chairperson, SCWEC, Ms. Ambreen Zaman, Senior Manager Thematic Strategies, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation, Ms. Riffat Malik, Vice President FPCCI, Ms. Shaiyenne Malik, CEO, SamanZar, and Ms. Hira Zainab, Secretary General, PASHA.

The event started off with the welcome address of Ms. Afsana Rahimi, Chairperson SCWEC (Afghanistan Chapter). During her address, she emphasized on the current situation of women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan, their participation in business, public presence and the challenges they are facing after the pandemic. “In Afghanistan, the overall situation in terms of socio-economic, cultural as well as political and geographical aspects is different from other developing countries around the world. Female participation in business and their public presence is rather exceptionally new in Afghanistan” said Ms. Afsana.



*Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Former Chairperson SCWEC addressing the august audience*

Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Former Chairperson SCWEC was the Chief Guest of the program. She stated, “With the provision of enabling a holistic environment in which women can translate their ideas into successful business ventures, South Asia can unlock the hidden potential of its human development”.

Addressing the conference, Ms. Birgit Lamm, Head of Country Office Pakistan, FNF spoke about necessity-driven entrepreneurship in South Asia whereas, Mirza Abdul Rehman, Coordinator, FPCCI Capital Office on behalf of President FPCCI in his address appreciated the efforts of SCWEC and the role of women entrepreneurs. He was of the opinion that prosperity in any sector without the involvement of women is impossible.



*Address by Mirza Abdul Rehman, Coordinator, FPCCI Capital Office during the Women's Business Conference*

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI and former President FPCCI acknowledged the role of SCWEC and how it has engaged the women of South Asia to promote e-commerce, women startups, digital media marketing tools and gender smart innovations.



*Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI and former President FPCCI addressing the distinguished guests at the Women Business Conference*

During the sessions, speakers shared experiences and insights of their actions to execute noteworthy inclusivity and equality, also reporting on their progress in ensuring that how their institutions and organizations are all advancing women’s leadership and securing seats for women at every decision-making table. The entire audience actively participated in the Q&A.

The conference concluded with the remarks of Ms. Hina Mansab Khan, Vice Chairperson SCWEC who thanked SCCI, FNF, FPCCI, public sector organizations and the speakers for their valuable input and suggestions.



*Concluding remarks by of Ms. Hina Mansab Khan, Vice Chairperson SCWEC (Pakistan Chapter)*



*Address by Ms Riffat Malik, Vice President FPCCI*



*Participants of SCWEC Women Business Conference*