

# PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2019



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# “OVERCOMING CHALLENGES & EXPLORING UNTAPPED POTENTIAL IN PROFESSIONAL WOMEN”



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**“WOMEN ARE THE LARGEST UNTAPPED  
RESERVOIR OF TALENT IN THE WORLD”**

—HILLARY CLINTON

# THE GLASS CEILING NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED

“Women are equally capable and successful”

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Proven corporate success

“The time to learn and appreciate diversity is now”

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Local & global progress

“Bringing in women at all levels benefits everybody”

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BUT Discrimination persists



# WHY ARE WOMEN RISING?

## MORE SKILLS + INTEREST

Including traditionally “male-only” roles

## BARRIER REMOVAL

Impact of lobby groups, laws, equal opportunity policies

## PROGRESSIVE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Pressure, progressive views, societal views, male leaders’ scandals (e.g. Enron)



# WHAT CHALLENGES HINDER WOMEN EMPOWERMENT?

**1**

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Women are considered to be “homemakers” and nothing more

**2**

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Raising a family  
vs.  
Achieving career ambitions

**3**

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Stiff competition & harsh attitudes

**4**

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Raising capital  
(e.g. women entrepreneurs not given priority)

**5**

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Demoralization which may limit goals & progress



# WHAT CHALLENGES DO FEMALES FACE IN THE WORKPLACE?

# 1

## Wrong Expectations

Judged more than a man, and if you are not cute you do not care about your job.

# 2

## Work-Life Balance

Personal life tends to suffer due to work commitments.

# 3

## Ego Clashes

A man or another woman who refuses to take orders from a female boss. (Work around the one who behaves as such).

# 4

## Climbing the career ladder

Men advance faster as the society believes that women are “incompetent”. (Need to work harder/get close to decision makers).

5

## Fear

Afraid of making a mistake, fear of failure. Poor performing companies may be given a lady CEO so that she may fall of the cliff.

7

## Believe in yourself

The virtually inaudible question “Who am I to...?”

6

## Perfectionist tendencies

Some ladies work so well that they get paralyzed by their perfectionist tendencies.

8

## Shifting from being judgmental to yourselves

An internal conflict between being perceived as a respected leader versus a bossy woman.

# 9

## Race and Ethnicity

Black women struggle and find it hard to make it to the top. Be smart/beat them at their game.

# 11

## Returning to the workforce

Coming back to the workforce after being a caregiver.

# 10

## Removing negative energy

Think positively about yourself and move on. Pick up on a team to work with – inside circle.

# 12

## Sexual Harassment

Common today. Seducing you with sexy remarks/ emails/ pictures/ wrong touching. Ensure that there are company policies to deal with such. Ask during interview.

# Challenges of an African Woman

African Union

- 1. Economic exclusion and financial systems that perpetuate discrimination**
- 2. Limited participation in political and public life including cultural decisions or political expression**
- 3. Lack of access to good education and poor retention of girls in schools**
- 4. Gender-based violence; harmful cultural practices and early marriages**
- 5. Exclusive of women from peace talks and cease fires decisions considering that in a certain country quarter million women were raped during a civil war. The war affected women but negotiations were being done by men.**



# WHAT CHALLENGES DO FEMALE LEADERS (E.G. CEOs) FACE?

1

Female Leaders are still a minority

## Creates Challenges:

Being the only woman

Communicating with male counterparts

Questions that men don't get asked

Being a pregnant CEO

2

Being the only woman

## EXPECTATIONS

Personal life | Career | Community | Work

# 3

Pregnancies, feeding babies,  
caregiving

## **BALANCE & EXPECTATION**

Family

Board

Organization

Maternity plans



**SO WHAT'S THE WAY FORWARD?**



It will take women at all levels, including the top to change the conversation to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored

**Sherly Sandberg**

**In 2017, World Economic Forum estimated that it will take 118 years for economic equality.**

**Get more women involved. The country, economy and community will be stronger and more prosperous.**

**Mobilize CEOs and world leaders to commit to gender diversity and grow a pipeline of top women leaders.**