



WOMEN'S FORUM MAURITIUS 2016 OPENS WITH CALL FOR 'INNOVATIVE GREEN GROWTH' AND INCREASING INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN TO MEET CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

First-ever Women's Forum Meeting in Africa focuses international attention on sustainable solutions for Mauritius, Small Island Developing States and African Countries

Republic of Mauritius, 20 June 2016 – In her opening remarks at Women's Forum Mauritius this morning, **H.E. Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim**, President of the Republic of Mauritius, evoked Martin Luther King's "*fierce urgency of now*" and emphasized the necessity of "*the involvement of one and all, especially, women at all levels to tackle the adverse effects of a changing climate.*" At the same time, she sounded a note of optimism, encouraging the audience in the packed plenary hall to recognize "*new opportunities for innovative green growth, new sources of exports, and a stimulation of trade and innovation.*"

Organized by the **Women's Forum for the Economy & Society** with the support and collaboration of President Gurib-Fakim, Women's Forum Mauritius is taking place 20-21 June 2016 in the Republic of Mauritius. Building on the theme '*Meeting the climate challenge for SIDS and Africa*', the high-level two day Meeting brings together **more than 350 thought-leaders** – scientists, policymakers, and business leaders, women and men – from **more than 40 countries**. Together they are debating climate and health solutions; best practices for agriculture and biodiversity; sustainable energy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS); how to advance innovation in agriculture, health and land use; improving the participation of women and youth in scientific and technological training; and processes for frugal green innovations with value-added for SIDS economies.

"*The stakes are high,*" declared **President Gurib-Fakim**, who achieved distinction as a world-renowned biodiversity expert before she was elected president of Mauritius in June 2015. "*A disproportionate burden is and will be borne by the poorest and most vulnerable countries and populations when in fact they are not responsible for global warming. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are already experiencing severe storms, flash floods and increased sea-level rise with seawater affecting potable water as well as impacting agricultural land. In drought-prone regions in Africa, food insecurity and poor harvests are now a reality. Many African countries are facing failed crops and staples this year.*"

Jacqueline Franjou, CEO of the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society, paid tribute to President Gurib-Fakim as an important voice here for her country, for climate action, and for the cause of gender parity. "*We have an opportunity to demonstrate that gender parity is an urgent necessity for the improvement of our economies and societies,*" she said. "*As more women enter the economy, poverty declines, economic growth increases, and our ability to protect and preserve the planet improves. This is true whether we are in Mexico or in France, Myanmar or Brazil, Belgium or Italy, the UAE or Mexico – all countries where the Women's Forum has played a role in enabling women's voices to be heard.*"

Among the nearly 60 speakers attending Women's Forum Mauritius are **Jill Farant**, Professor of Molecular and Cell Biology, University of Cape Town, winner of the 2012 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science award; **Nicolas Hulot**, President, Fondation Nicolas Hulot pour la Nature et l'Homme; **Segenet Kelemu**, Director General, ICIPE winner of the 2014 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science award; **Wanjira Mathai**, Professor of Molecular and Cell Biology, University of Cape Town; and **Laurence Tubiana**, French ambassador for international climate negotiations.

CEO Champions, a longstanding Women's Forum Initiative, brings together for the first time in Mauritius a group of international leaders from the public and private sector in a special closed-door working session to consider '*The gender gap in governance: Africa*'. A **Special Delegation from South Africa** is participating at Women's Forum Mauritius. And three **Amazing Women** will share stories of how they became catalysts in their organizations and communities.

[Visit the Women's Forum website](#) for complete information about Women's Forum Mauritius 2016

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About the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society

Since 2005 the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society, a Publicis Groupe company, has been the world's leading platform featuring women's views and voices on major social and economic issues. Our meetings around the world feature broad, rich and edgy debates, deploying the experience of both women and men – business leaders, researchers, politicians, entrepreneurs... – across all generations and geographies. Each meeting serves as a vital sounding board for today's essential ideas, and as a springboard for tomorrow's solutions. In addition to the annual Women's Forum Global Meeting in Deauville, France, important Women's Forum meetings have taken place in Brazil, Myanmar, Italy, Brussels, Dubai and Mexico. The first-ever Women's Forum Mauritius is taking place 20-21 June 2016 in Mauritius. The 12th edition of the Women's Forum Global Meeting is slotted for 30 November-2 December 2016 in Deauville, France.



**WOMEN'S FORUM
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