

SPECIAL SESSION 12

The role of media and advertising to promote women's economic empowerment in the Arab States

Thursday, 17th March, 2:15pm – 3:45pm Beirut time

Background and objective

The Special Session will shed light on the role of media to tackle the issue of persistent and discriminatory power structures and gendered stereotypes that prevail in the Arab States region. The discussion will focus on media as a key enabler to advance women's economic empowerment and leadership, by contributing to the regional discourse with content that amplifies women's voices and experiences. The participation of women media content producers will provide insights on how women's representation in the media can impact positively on depictions of girls and women and help to address gendered stereotypes that limit women's economic participation and leadership.

Questions to be addressed

1. To achieve gender equality, it is essential to recognise and celebrate women's role in public life and the economy. For this reason, signatories to the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) as well as the [UN Women Media Compact](#) commit to the promotion of women's participation and leadership in public life and in business. This session will consider the benefits for media and advertising groups to commit and become advocates of women's empowerment.
2. Research suggests that positive representations of female role models in non-traditional sectors help to drive social norms change. Therefore, showcasing the stories of female role models encourages girls and women to pursue careers in sectors where they are under-represented. The panellists will discuss how female role models and media outlets can, together with the civil society, foster women's interest to pursue the educational goals required for the digital future.
3. Finally, executive boards and work teams are often not gender-balanced. This has an impact on the substance and the angle from which a news story is covered, resulting in a gender-biased view of reality. As a woman, working in media thus comes with its difficulties. The strategies taken by the media and advertising industries to create gender-balanced teams that cover stories in a gender-sensitive manner will be addressed during the session.

Moderator(s)

- **Ms. Rasha Qandeel**, Bilingual Lead Presenter, BBC News Arabic, Egypt

Panellists

- **Ms. Carla Sertin**, Group Editor – Energy & Construction, ITP Media Group, Lebanon
- **Prof. Ms. Dina Matar**, Professor of Political Communication and Arab Media, SOAS – University of London
- **Ms. Natalie Shardan**, Managing Director, Serviceplan Middle East, Dubai
- **Ms. Sarah-Jean Cunningham**, Managing Director, Magenta Consulting, United Kingdom

This Special Session will be organized online. [REGISTER HERE](#)