

## 6th OICCI Women Empowerment Awards Showcase Corporate Contributions to Gender Equality

**Karachi, April 30:** Emphasizing the vital importance of creating conducive conditions for women to flourish in the realms of business and entrepreneurship, the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OICCI) held its 6th Women Empowerment Awards ceremony on Tuesday.

Addressing the members, OICCI Vice President Rehan Shaikh said, "Pakistan's ranking on the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index has remained dishearteningly low, with a score of 58.8 for two consecutive years. Against this backdrop, empowering women isn't just a moral imperative; it's also an economic necessity." He stressed the significant returns on investment in women's education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, underscoring their pivotal role in driving economic growth and societal development.

The top honors of the 6th OICCI Women Empowerment Awards were bestowed upon three distinguished companies: Procter & Gamble Pakistan claimed the title of Champions, with Nestle Pakistan and Unilever Pakistan securing the first and second runners-up positions, respectively. An independent jury evaluated the performance of companies across various categories, recognizing excellence and innovation in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Expanding the scope of recognition beyond organizations, Shazia Syed, Global EVP – Beverages at Unilever, was honored with the Iconic Corporate Women Leaders Award, acknowledging her outstanding contributions to corporate leadership.

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, former caretaker finance minister and recipient of the Nishan-i-Imtiaz for outstanding public service, honored the ceremony as the chief guest. In her address, she highlighted the critical importance of providing women with access to finance and education, emphasizing that these opportunities are fundamental for women to excel in all spheres of life.

In addition to celebrating achievements, the event served as a platform for the launch of the 'Increasing Women's Inclusion in the Pakistani Economy' handbook, a comprehensive resource developed by OICCI. This policy paper consists of key themes emphasizing critical aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, including promoting equal opportunity, addressing the gender pay gap, ensuring workplace safety, fostering inclusivity, promoting economic inclusion, and supporting work-life balance.

Launching the handbook, Andrew Bailey, a member of the OICCI Managing Committee, emphasized the importance of implementing recommendations stated in the paper to realize Pakistan's vision of a more equitable and prosperous society.

Closing the ceremony, M Abdul Aleem, CE/Secretary General of OICCI, said "Women empowerment has been a cornerstone for OICCI members, represented by 'OICCI Women', our flagship initiative to enhance women's inclusion in the economy."

The event not only celebrated overall corporate achievements but also recognized special category awardees. Notable among these were Pepsi Co for Organization Commitment on Women Empowerment, Total PARCO Pakistan Limited for Leadership and Strategy, Engro Corp for Conducive Workplace Environment for Women, Shell Pakistan Limited for Work-Life Balance and Integration, Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan Ltd. for Women Leaders' Development, Jazz for Notable Growth in Women Empowerment, and Chevron Pakistan Lubricants Private Limited for SME Champions.

As Pakistan continues its journey toward gender equality and economic inclusivity, events like the 6th Women Empowerment Awards serve as catalysts for progress, inspiring collective action and fostering a more equitable and prosperous future for all.

*The OICCI is the collective voice of major foreign investors in Pakistan, with over 200 members, from more than 30 countries. OICCI members contribute over one-third of Pakistan's total tax revenue and are involved in 14 sectors of the economy. They facilitate the transfer of technology and skills and provide employment to a significant number of people. About a third of OICCI member companies are listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange, and many are associates of Global Fortune 500 companies. OICCI members also engage in corporate social responsibility activities benefiting 46 million persons from underprivileged communities. For further information, please contact [nisma@oicci.org](mailto:nisma@oicci.org) or visit [www.oicci.org](http://www.oicci.org)*