

## OICCI Leads the Empowerment of Persons With Disabilities and Transformative Solutions for an Inclusive Future

**KARACHI** – On the occasion of the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) hosted its 2nd Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Conference 2024, at the OICCI Building in Karachi. The event convened a diverse group of CEOs, HR heads, business leaders, and policymakers for impactful discussions advocating for the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the workforce.

Themed “Amplifying the Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an Inclusive, Sustainable Future” the event highlighted the imperative for businesses to adopt accessible and inclusive workplace practices. In his opening remarks, OICCI Managing Committee member **Ahmed Khan Bozai**, emphasized the importance of addressing systemic barriers that hinder PWD inclusion. He stated, *“True inclusion goes beyond breaking barriers – it’s about building a workplace culture that values the strengths of every individual. When businesses embrace diversity, they not only unlock innovation but also create environments where everyone feels they truly belong and can contribute meaningfully.”*

The conference focused on four key areas for fostering inclusion: addressing barriers to PWD employment, improving HR policies and recruitment practices, enhancing accessible workplace infrastructure, and strengthening national policies through public-private partnerships. These key areas provided a roadmap for businesses to overcome challenges and implement sustainable strategies for inclusion. OICCI Secretary General **M Abdul Aleem** highlighted the need for meaningful change, stating, *“Inclusion isn’t just a goal—it’s an ongoing commitment to creating workplaces where people of all abilities are given the opportunity to thrive and contribute.”*

A standout moment of the event was a compelling address by **Sadia Salman**, CEO of Diet by Design, who highlighted the value of neurodiversity and urged organizations to embrace the unique talents of individuals with diverse abilities. *“Inclusion is not a favor but an investment in a more dynamic and innovative workforce,”* she remarked. Her speech was complemented by personal stories of resilience shared by **Salman Elahi**, Founder of the Blind Institute for National Awareness and Empowerment (BINAIE) and Supervisor at K-Electric, and **Arslan Ahmed**, Analyst Client Care Unit at Standard Chartered Bank, both of whom discussed overcoming professional challenges and achieving success despite their disabilities.

The event also featured a dynamic panel discussion with leading experts, including **Madiha Siddiqui**, Head of Empowerment Programs at NOWPDP, **Khalid Zaman Khan**, SEVP and Group Head of HR, Learning and Organizational Development at Meezan Bank Limited, and **Rizwan Dalia**, CPO at K-Electric, **Shabana Kousar**, DG of SPDPA and **Ali Tareen**, Founder of Khaas Foodz Kitchen. Moderated by **Rabia Khattak**, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Jazz, the panel explored actionable strategies to address gaps in HR, infrastructure, and policy and emphasized the importance of collaboration between private corporations, advocacy groups, and the public sector in driving long-term progress in inclusion efforts.

In her closing remarks, OICCI Managing Committee member **Farheen Salman Amir**, delivered an inspiring call to action. *“It is our collective responsibility to create workplaces where everyone, without bias towards physical ability; can thrive. By aligning our corporate practices with national policies, we can foster accessibility and equity for all,”* she stated. In line with this, OICCI pledged to work towards the government’s target of 2% PWD employment in the corporate sector and to document and share best practices that can serve as a guide for other organizations.

## PRESS RELEASE



*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 fourth 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 [sgoffice@oicci.org](mailto:sgoffice@oicci.org) or visit [www.oicci.org](http://www.oicci.org)*