Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today’s event has made it even clearer that there is no longer a question that women’s economic empowerment raises up all of society.

When we look at the data, the economic case is remarkably compelling:

Research from the McKinsey Global Institute demonstrated that global GDP has the potential to rise by 12 trillion USD by 2025 by narrowing the global gender gap in the workplace.

In the Middle East and North Africa, this would mean an additional 15 percent GDP increase by 2025, on top of long-term expected growth.

In the UAE, we recognize that the economic empowerment of women has been – and continues to be – fundamental to our country’s development as a progressive, inclusive, and tolerant society.

We believe that in order to build cohesive and prosperous societies, we all must do our share to bring to life a “gender-inclusive cycle”. We need to make sure that women: have a seat at the table, a voice in planning and designing of development priorities, and a hand at implementation.

This is also why, at the national level, we recognize the importance of investing in women, so that they can reach their full potential. The UAE Gender Balance Council leads the nation’s efforts to fulfill the UAE’s vision of becoming one of the world’s top 25 countries in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.

Our domestic investments are bearing fruits:

We currently have over 23,000 registered businesswomen in the UAE with investments totaling more than 10 billion US Dollars.

Today, our women constitute nearly 50 percent of our labor force.

The UAE’s international cooperation agenda is informed by our experience at the national level. The recently launched UAE Foreign Assistance Policy includes “empowerment of women” as one of its three global thematic focus areas. The Policy translates our domestic commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment to the global arena because we know, and have experienced first-hand, that there is no sustainable development without women at its core.

The UAE is keen to strengthen regional and international partnerships. The UAE’s capital, Abu Dhabi, is host to the liaison office of UN Women and contributes to the organization’s core budget. Providing strategic advice, the Permanent Representative of the UAE to the UN in New York currently serves as President of the Executive Board for 2017.
We are enhancing our engagement with the OECD-DAC’s Network on Gender Equality, also known as GENDERNET, including improving international development assistance that targets gender equality as policy objective.

Here at the UN, the UAE is doing its part to support the economic empowerment of women through its membership in the Group of Champions for Women’s Economic Empowerment.

The UAE also served on the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel for Women’s Economic Empowerment, working to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by placing women’s economic empowerment at the top of the international agenda. The Panel’s groundbreaking report that was released in March lays out the business case for women’s economic empowerment, identifying seven drivers and four areas of work to ensure gender equality on the economic landscape.

It is of utmost importance to ensure that the report’s recommendations are implemented, in order to accelerate progress towards women’s full and equal economic participation. Further, the report acknowledges that gender inequalities remain stubborn around the world, but can be overcome by removing systemic barriers.

The UAE is committed to breaking down these barriers.

We are determined to crystallize meaningful global partnerships to advance this goal.

We remain committed to the economic empowerment of women because it is our national strategy, because it is a smart foreign assistance policy, and because it is the cornerstone of a more sustainable global economic model.