

For Immediate Release

**TWF Presents a Celebration of Women in Luxury Brands:
June 3 Panel & Networking Event**

Hong Kong, May 31, 2013 – The Women's Foundation, one of Hong Kong's leading NGOs dedicated to the advancement of women, today announced the third event in their Leading Women Speaker Series: a Celebration of Women in Luxury Brands, to be held on Monday, June 3. The Leading Women Speaker Series, launched last November in partnership with Bloomberg, is a series of panel discussions examining the opportunities and challenges women face across traditionally male-dominated industries and professional sectors.

The panel will feature the following distinguished speakers:

- * Rebecca Ip – Vice President, Tiffany & Co, Hong Kong and Macau
- * Fiona Kotur Marin - CEO & Founder, Kotur
- * Joanne Ooi - CEO & Co-Founder, Plukka
- * Sarah Young O'Donnell - CEO Hong Kong Seibu / Beauty Bazaar Harvey Nichols, China
- * Anya Hindmarch MBE - Renowned British designer (video remarks)

The panel will be moderated by John Dawson, Bloomberg TV Anchor

Topics for discussion include:

- * Are women in luxury brands subject to discrimination in terms of pay disparities, international assignments and other opportunities for career advancement?
- * What kind of qualifications, skill sets and on the job experience do you need to become a leader in this field? How accessible are these opportunities to women?
- * How important are mentors and sponsors to achieving career success in the luxury brand industry?
- * How do women in luxury brands cope with the constant pressure to "look the part"?
- * What are the opportunities and challenges for female entrepreneurs in the luxury space?

The event is significantly over-subscribed having sold out the first day registration opened and with a 400-strong waiting list. A number of seats are reserved for female undergraduates pursuing design and business courses at leading local universities.

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Su-Mei Thompson, CEO of The Women's Foundation, said "We are delighted by the strong interest in Monday's panel on women in luxury brands which is unsurprising given the strong demand for luxury goods in Hong Kong from designer clothing to jewellery and watches to super premium beauty and personal care. Women are an important target market for luxury brands but the senior roles at the big luxury brands in Hong Kong tend to be dominated by men. By contrast, Hong Kong is home to a number of women entrepreneurs who have founded highly successful global luxury brands. We look forward to hearing our stellar line-up of exceptional speakers engage in a behind the scenes discussion of what it's really like to work in the luxury industry and how women can position themselves for success".

The Women's Foundation also announced that it has commissioned the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to conduct research that defines the challenges and opportunities for women pursuing careers in the male dominated industries covered in the Leading Women Speaker Series. The research will include interview and survey findings and desk research. The first paper, which will be published in October, will cover Women in Technology, the Trading Floor and Hedge Funds, Luxury Brands and Logistics and Transport.

The EIU's preliminary research on the Luxury Brands sector in Hong Kong shows that 49% of entry-level positions are filled by women. However, this significantly decreases in top level positions. Women hold just 27% of senior management positions in luxury brands in Hong Kong, compared with a global average of 35%.

The Women's Foundation will also be publishing recommendations and best practices for business, industry associations, educators, parents, and the Government to achieve a more equal playing field for women looking to enter the luxury industry or who are already working in the sector.

According to Mandie Fankhauser, Head of Recruiting APAC at Bloomberg, "We are incredibly proud to be partnering and working with The Women's Foundation on the Leading Women Speaker Series. Bloomberg itself has a very diverse culture and women are a key and integral part of our business. We are passionate and excited about working with The Women's Foundation on examining the challenges and furthering opportunities for women in the workplace throughout this inspiring series of panel discussions."

The initiative enjoys the support of the British Council as Principal Supporting Partner for the Leading Women Speaker Series in 2013. The Women in Luxury Brands event is also supported by Brunswick Group, the French Chamber of Commerce, L'Dezen, LVMH Moet Hennessy, Louis Vuitton and Plukka.

About The Leading Women Speaker Series

The Women's Foundation's Leading Women Speaker Series in partnership with Bloomberg consists of a series of panel events looking at the opportunities and challenges for women in traditionally male dominated industries and professions. In addition to Luxury Brands, other sectors being considered are Logistics and Transport, Oil and Gas, Pharmaceuticals, Private Equity and Hospitality. Under the mantra of Aspire, Grow and Lead, the panels will feature outstanding female leaders from each sector, examine the root causes for the institutional and cultural barriers preventing women from advancing, and showcase corporate best practices for the retention and promotion of female talent.

About The Women's Foundation

The Women's Foundation is a Hong Kong registered not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Hong Kong. TWF is focused on challenging gender stereotypes, increasing the number of women in decision-making and leadership roles, and empowering women in poverty through ground-breaking research, innovative and impactful community programmes, and education and advocacy. For more information on The Women's Foundation, please visit <http://www.thewomensfoundationhk.org>

About Bloomberg:

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