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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUB and the Lebanese League for Women in Business Host Sara Minkara for a Conversation on Inclusive Leadership, Innovation, and Artificial Intelligence

The Center for Women in Business (CWIB) at the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) at the American University of Beirut (AUB), in collaboration with the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB), hosted a public conversation with Sara Minkara, former US Special Advisor on International Disability Rights. The discussion explored her leadership journey and perspectives on diplomacy, inclusive innovation, entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, and the role of inclusive leadership in building more equitable and sustainable societies.

The event opened with welcoming remarks by Dr. Nada Khaddage-Soboh, director of the Center for Women in Business; Professor Yusuf Sidani, dean of the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business; and Abir Chebaro, president of the Lebanese League for Women in Business.

In her remarks, Dr. Khaddage-Soboh emphasized that hosting Minkara reflects the center's mission of creating platforms that bring together academic research, leadership, and policymaking to advance more inclusive and equitable business environments. She noted that diversity and inclusion are no longer simply institutional priorities, but fundamental drivers of innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development.

Professor Sidani reaffirmed the commitment of the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business and the American University of Beirut to developing leaders capable of creating positive societal impact. He highlighted the faculty's dedication to advancing diversity, inclusion, and innovation through education, research, and strategic partnerships that respond to the evolving opportunities and challenges shaping today's business landscape.

Welcoming participants, Chebaro underscored that this collaborative event between the Lebanese League for Women in Business and the AUB Center for Women in Business reflects a shared commitment to creating spaces where academic, professional, and thought leaders can engage in meaningful dialogue on pressing issues related to leadership, inclusion, innovation, and the future of business. She added that hosting Minkara provided a valuable opportunity to learn from a global leadership experience demonstrating how vision, resilience, and determination can drive meaningful change across institutions, policies, and communities.

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The opening remarks reflected a shared vision of the importance of collaboration among academia, civil society, and the private sector in advancing women's leadership and developing innovative solutions to today's economic and social challenges.

Moderated by Rana Ghandour Salhab, board member of the Lebanese League for Women in Business, regional managing partner of People & Purpose and member of the executive committee at Deloitte Middle East, the conversation traced Minkara's journey from her Lebanese roots to global leadership, illustrating how personal experiences can become catalysts for change in public policy, business, and society.

The discussion explored the role of inclusive leadership in fostering innovation, the economic value of diversity, and women's leadership, while highlighting the responsibility of governments, businesses, and corporate boards to expand opportunities for all. It also examined the growing role of artificial intelligence in building more inclusive societies, emphasizing that technology achieves its greatest impact when developed through a human-centered and inclusive lens.

Reflecting on the discussion, Rana Ghandour Salhab said, "Today's conversation reaffirmed that inclusion is no longer viewed solely as a social issue, but as a fundamental pillar of good leadership, sound governance, innovation, and economic competitiveness. When universities, businesses, policymakers, and women leaders come together around a shared vision, empowering women and developing the next generation of leaders becomes a national endeavor that extends beyond individual initiatives."

The event concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session, providing participants with the opportunity to engage directly with Minkara, followed by a networking reception that brought together representatives from academia, the private sector, and civil society, reinforcing the commitment of AUB and the Lebanese League for Women in Business to advancing inclusive leadership, women's empowerment, and initiatives that translate knowledge into sustainable impact for Lebanon and the region.

ENDS

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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About the Center for Women in Business (CWIB)

The Center for Women in Business (CWIB) at the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business at the American University of Beirut is an academic center dedicated to advancing women's leadership and economic participation through research, executive education, strategic partnerships, and policy engagement. The Center works to generate evidence-based knowledge and translate it into initiatives that promote more inclusive and sustainable business ecosystems across Lebanon and the region.

About the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)

The Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) is a non-profit, membership-based, non-political organization dedicated to empowering women in business through networking, mentorship, professional development, and advocacy. LLWB works to strengthen women's economic participation and leadership across Lebanon.

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