

# Private sector urged to stress on female emiratisation

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- By Sharmila Dhal, Senior Reporter, XPRESS
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Dubai: The UAE must adopt a pragmatic approach to female emiratisation in the private sector, a top official said on Monday.

Speaking at the 12th Global Businesswomen and Leaders Summit in Dubai, Elballa Hagona, resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said, "Female emiratisation must be motivated not merely by satisfying regulatory requirements such as quotas but rather by a genuine thrust towards integration of Emirati women and women empowerment in the private sector."

The summit was organised by knowledge and services provider Datamatix to mark the 100th International Women's Day.

Currently, the private sector in the country is largely dependant on the expatriate workforce, said Hagona.

"Emirati women have made steady progress towards visible and active involvement in positions that were traditionally the sole preserve of men," he said, pointing to how they are strongly supported by the government and enjoy equal and unprejudiced opportunities to participate in societal building.

Addressing the summit earlier, Oluwatoyin Saraki, the first lady of Kwara state in Nigeria, spoke of the empowerment of women in her state through the efforts of the non-profit Wellbeing Foundation which she had established in 2003. Over 55 per cent of the population in the state comprise women, she said and the biggest challenge that she faced in empowering them was the lack of resources.

Others who spoke at the summit gave insights on how women could start and sustain their own business and participate in economic growth.

Most speakers agreed that the issue was no longer that of a gender gap but rather what women could do by harnessing their talent.

Ali Al Kamali, Managing Director of Datamatix and Hagona honoured seven women with the 2010 Middle East Businesswomen and Leaders' Awards.

The winners from over 900 nominations were Ria Ramal of Dubai Sports TV, UAE (Sports Media Woman of the Year), Dr Jawhara Bint Fahd Al Saoud, University Director, Princess Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University (Women in Education Services), Kawla Saeed Al Naboodah (Society Development), Ala'a Al Harriri (technical), Dr Amani Bouresli (Economic Policy and Knowledge Development) and Dr Eiman Saud Abokhodair (Knowledge Management).

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