

Empowerment of women and gender parity is an economic imperative

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New Delhi , FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), the oldest women business chamber of Southeast Asia and the women's wing of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) in the year 2019 will be focusing more on innovative ways to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure. "The theme for International Women's Day 2019 which takes place on March 8 every year is ' Think equal, build smart, innovate for change' FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) members will find and develop ways in which innovation can remove barriers and accelerate progress for gender equality, encourage investment in gender-responsive social systems, and build services and infrastructure that meet the needs of women and girls." Said Ms Pinky Reddy, President, FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) in a press statement today. "The achievement of the ambitious United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires transformative shifts, integrated approaches and new solutions, particularly when it comes to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Based on current trajectories, existing interventions will not suffice to achieve UN's Sustainable goal of a Planet 50-50 by 2030. Innovative approaches that disrupt "business as usual" are central to removing structural barriers and ensuring that no woman and no girl is left behind." Said Ms Reddy "Innovation and technology provide unprecedented opportunities, yet trends indicate a growing gender digital divide and women are under-represented in the field of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and design. It prevents them from developing and influencing gender-responsive innovations to achieve transformative gains for society. From mobile banking to artificial intelligence and the internet of things, it is vital that women's ideas and experiences equally influence the design and implementation of the innovations that shape our future societies." She added "Empowerment of women and gender parity is an economic imperative. This stands true more so today in the global context - when women are empowered and can claim their rights and access to land, leadership opportunities - economies grow, food security is enhanced and prospects are improved for current and future generations. This can be seen from how the developed nations have been able to move ahead - as they have taken the women force along. " Said Ms Reddy. "FLO, recognizes women's participation in the social, political and economic activities of the country enriches the fabric of the nation. Increased access to resources and opportunities for women not only improves their own economic status but also their households and communities." Said Ms Reddy, "Women should be self-reliant in order to achieve their goals in life. Hence, FLO' focus in the new year would be to increase women participation in the process of economic development and to create a pool of resources by skilling them at grassroots, middle and senior level with our tag line 'changing lives'," said Ms Reddy. FLO was initially started to bring women empowerment and establish women as better entrepreneurs in a workspace. Today, it has 15 chapters in all the top cities in the country . FLO was established in 1983, as a division of FICCI which is the apex body of industry and commerce in India. As an All India Organisation for women, FLO has chapters in Mumbai, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Guwahati and Kolkata with its head office in Delhi, which has about 6000 women members from all walks of life - entrepreneurs, professionals, homemakers and corporate executives. "Keeping these trends in consideration, FLO will continue to work towards the inclusion of more women in the workforce through skilling initiatives in the field of telecom, transport and e-commerce, initiatives for grassroots women, providing support to women entrepreneurs' through Swayam which is our business consultancy cell, conducting directorship training

and helping place women on Corporate Boards through the FLO Women Directors programme. We will also expand and strengthen our initiatives to complement Government programmes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and Make in India,” added Ms Reddy.

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