



Event Package—September 23rd, New York City

*Towards a Level Playing Field*  
The Business Case for Gender Diversity

With special guest speaker

**Cherie Blair**

Joined by panellists

Janet Hanson, Laura Liswood, and Jenny Shipley

Presented by

Heidi Sinclair and James Breiding



*"The firms and the nations which succeed will be the ones which harness the talents of every one of us, no matter what our gender or background." - Cherie Blair*

[www.womensleadershipfund.com](http://www.womensleadershipfund.com)



## *Highlights from Cherie Blair's keynote speech*

I am delighted to be with you this afternoon and for the chance to discuss a subject which is vitally important for women, for men – and for our future prosperity. It is also a challenge, of course, which the Naissance Capital Women Leadership Fund has been set up to help overcome in a very imaginative but also practical way.

By investing in those companies which have set a lead in harnessing women's talent and potential and supporting new women leaders, you are helping overcome the gender gap in business. You are also, of course, helping make money for your investors.

The evidence shows that companies who give women an equal chance to shine and equal responsibility are also likely to be more profitable companies. A study, for example, of 600 venture-backed companies across Europe found those run by female chief executives delivered far higher revenues using less capital than those run by men. Companies in the UK which have women on their boards perform better than those run exclusively by the old boys club. ..

... We simply can't go on not making the most of the talents and potential of half the population. Now as a lawyer specialising in the field of employment law and human rights – and as a woman - you would be right in thinking that I believe lifting these barriers is a fundamental point of principle and justice. But if it also helps our cause to point out that it is stupid economics to waste the talents of half the world's population, I am quite happy to do so.

For a revolution is happening. And those firms and countries which don't understand this are going to be left behind. In developed and developing nations, women have become the drivers of economic growth.

The term womenomics has been coined to describe this global phenomenon, seen by some experts as the single most important factor in our economies this century. In Europe, for example, women have filled six of eight million new jobs created this decade. The rate of business start ups in the US is twice that of men. Women now make 80% of consumer decisions in the US which is why businesses which is why male-dominated firms put themselves at a disadvantage.

It's why, too, the most far-sighted companies are working hard to recruit, retain and promote more women whether through mentoring schemes or introducing family-friendly policies. There is a long way to go. But the speed of change is growing.



# NAISSANCE



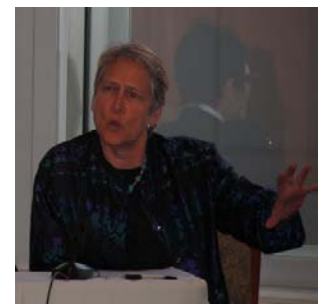
“There's no one who can do it all. That's actually the key about diversity. It's about choices, it's about capability, it's about not having a one-size-fits-all mentality” – *Cherie Blair, human rights lawyer and wife of former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair*

“About 15 to 20 years ago, very astute investors decided they didn't need 100 percent proof that global warming was causing the polar ice cap to melt. They became "early investors" in clean technology companies and most of them made a fortune. The opportunity to invest in women has many of the same strong "fundamentals" that make investing in this "undervalued asset class" so compelling. If we use the lack of investment in clean technologies as a textbook example of the devastating consequences "waiting for 100% proof" has had on society, we can boldly invest in women with confidence that the return on that investment over the next several decades will be extremely positive and significant. – *Janet Hanson, founder of 85 Broads*



“We know that women are making around 90 percent of the world's consumption decisions. Any board with half an ounce of intelligence, if they're delivering goods and services, will realize that having a mix of people on their boards and at in their senior managing seats is good business” – *Jenny Shipley, former Prime Minister, New Zealand*

“I've never heard anyone make a business case for *no* diversity” – *Laura Liswood, Co-founder, Council of World Women Leaders*





### A Message From Our CEO

Our friends at the Clinton Initiative, and many others, are doing wonderful things to expand the opportunity set for young women in emerging countries. Some of these will work and the numbers, owing to their vast demographics, will be mind-boggling.

But unless these women are afforded the opportunity to use their skills, to express their talents, to take positions commensurate with their achievements, they are likely to face the miserable prospect of life-long 'hibernation' - A phenomenon already experienced in this country, and perhaps by some of you in this room.

The Women's Leadership Fund is just as much for them, as it is for you.

- R. James Breiding





Among those contributing to the discussion...



*Muriel Siebert, founder of Siebert & Co., and first female member of the New York Stock Exchange*

*Westina Matthews, Senior Director of Corporate Responsibility, Merrill Lynch & Co.*



*Patti Stonesifer, CEO, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*

*Andrei Volgin, Founder, Spiral Universe*



*Lisa Witter, COO, Fenton Communications*





## Thank You

Thanks to all who attended, for making the event so lively and successful.  
Special thanks to our keynote speaker, Cherie Blair, and to Jenny Shipley, Janet Hanson and Laura Liswood, who joined Mrs. Blair for a very spirited panel discussion on the topic of gender diversity in business

### Among the guests:

85 Broads Inc.  
AIG Investments  
Berkshire Capital  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
BoardBench Companies LLC  
Carnegie Foundation  
Circle Group  
Citigroup  
Cook Pine Capital  
Fenton  
Girls Inc  
Green Technology Group, LLC  
Harvard Kennedy School's "Women and Public Policy Program"  
Institutional Investor  
JWT  
Kidd & Company LLC

### Among the guests:

Kingdon Capital Management  
Lese Investments L.L.C.  
Merrill Lynch  
National Council for Research on Women  
National Women's Law Center  
NBC Universal, Inc.  
New York Mercantile Exchange  
Platinum Gate Capital Management, LLC  
Sarina Investments Pty. Ltd.  
Solon Group, Inc. / Sapere Fund Management, LLC  
Spiral Universe  
Strauss Group  
Susie Buffett Foundation  
The Sabatier Group, Inc.  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Vogue Magazine  
Women for Women International



*"It has only been a generation since women could control their own fertility, so all the issues we are facing right now are new and complex. It is up to us to come to terms with them and map out a better future, not just for women, but for humanity" – Jenny Shipley*



*"Change only goes from the unthinkable, to the impossible, to the inevitable. So we just need to move down that path" – Laura Liswood*



If you wish to learn more about the Women's Leadership Fund, please contact Daniel Tudor:



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