



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)



“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*



“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 significant. – *Janet Hanson, founder of 85 Broads*





## *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.



### A Message From Our CEO, James Breiding

Our friends at the Clinton Initiative, and those among us today like Cherie Blair and Sheryl WuDunn, 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 developed countries, 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. Our efforts will help level the playing field and expand the opportunity set offered to women. More women deserve a chance to hire and train people, to invest in research, to decide where to build factories, to make mistakes and hone judgment.

The ultimate success of our initiative will depend on our ability to leverage the massive strength of the capital markets. And to do this, we must demonstrate that companies choosing from the entire universe of talent and knowledge, rather than just half of it, are better companies to invest in.

We must also demonstrate that diversity avoids the sort of disasters like Lehman, AIG, and Enron that have scarred free markets and destroyed massive amounts of wealth and confidence.

But we can not do it alone, so we need your help.

60% of the world's assets are managed by Women at Pension funds, Endowments, and Insurance companies. They are a latent army of supporters. But they are not, nor should they be, bold and courageous. This is why they need you. This is why we need you.

We are looking for a handful of significant investors of a similar stature to our board. The fund is seeking \$100 million from investors to put 'fuel in the tank' and to get 'this show on the road'.

The challenge is significant, and the challenge is now.

Please steer them our way.





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*

*Barbara Annis, Chair of Harvard Kennedy School Women's Leadership Board*



*Lisa Witter, COO, Fenton Communications*

*Lori Heinel, Managing Director, Citi Private Bank*





### *With Special Thanks to Sheryl WuDunn*

September 23<sup>rd</sup> was not only a special day for us- it is also Cherie Blair's birthday. Sheryl WuDunn, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, graciously agreed to attend in order to present a signed copy of her latest book, 'Half the Sky', as a gift to Mrs. Blair.

'Half the Sky' is merely part of her efforts (along with her husband, Nicholas Kristof) to defend the rights of women worldwide, through their Half the Sky Foundation, which can be found at [www.halftheskymovement.org](http://www.halftheskymovement.org)

### *Acknowledgements*

Many other people helped make this event possible- particularly we would like to thank Pat Mitchell, Iris Bohnet, and our board member Kim Campbell for all their efforts.

Also we are very grateful to Nadja Marcoz, for all her help in organising this event and making it so successful.





## 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  
IWT  
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:

Email: [dtudor@naissancecapital.com](mailto:dtudor@naissancecapital.com)

Telephone: +(41)449155220

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

