

Plenary Session n°4

« Place and role of women at all levels of responsibility in the world economy »



Thursday 25 October 2007

Speakers:

- Mrs Cheryl WOMACK (United States): Chairperson of Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World
- Mrs Hélène RATTE (France): Human Resources manager EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa) of Deloitte
- M. Prem K THOMAS (India): Chief Human Resources Manager of Blue Dart Aviation Ltd
- M. Nicolas DE MALEZIEUX (Switzerland-France): Co-manager of AMM Finance – external fortune management company
- M. Brian NOSEK (United States): Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Virginia, part of the « Project Implicit »



American, French, Indian and Belgium testimonies demonstrate that **obviously in all countries, women don't have as many employment and career opportunities as men.**

Education, social environment and differences of values between men and women are some of the causes of this gap. In 2000, the proportion of female employees in India was only 17,6%, with an impossibility for these women to reach the highest positions. As a matter of fact, the traditional role conferred on women: marriage, husband's career, children education and care to old parents remains very present in this country.

For Brian NOSEK, it is very interesting to show how feelings affect our judgment. As a matter of fact, toward a situation, each individual has assumptions influencing him/her. For example, concerning the shouts of a baby in front of a toy (a devil going out of his box), they would be representative of anger if the child is a boy and of fear if it is a girl for 50% of the tested panel. It is then necessary to understand the functioning of the spirit in order to fight against men/women discriminations within the world of work.

According to statistics, there will not be enough trained and capable men at every level of the economy in the coming years. **Women should then be considered as men's partners in professional life as well as at home.** As a matter of fact, women "*excel in the long-term follow-up of relationships and, globally, ask less and accomplish more*". Female values, (intuition, sensitivity for others, affectivity) will be compulsory for a better business management in the 21st century. Consequently, it is necessary to promote women in business. First encouraging sign: 50% of the business schools students nowadays are women.

Promote daily flexibility (partial time, day-nursery on the site...), **opportunities to work abroad** (telecommuting) and make the game's rules evolve are the basis of the development of gender diversity in the economy.

The creation of a performing trading fund in which 30 companies were selected on their policy of men/women equality as much as on their stock-exchange value demonstrates that the research for parity is a factor of performance and concerns more and more firms.