

**International Women's Day
Board of Trade Panel Discussion
Opening Remarks – Emanuela Heyninck, Chief Commissioner**

**“Inspiring Change” – this year’s theme for International Women’s Day
- inspired us to put together this panel.**

- When we started working with the Board of Trade on this event, we talked about how important it is to shift the narrative away from the problems women face at work...
- to how to move towards real, substantive culture shift.

Women make up 50% of the labour force...

- They are 50% of the graduates at virtually every level of our education system...
- And they make 80% of all purchasing decisions.

And yet...after 100 years of Women’s Days...

- first and second wave feminism...
- and, here in Ontario, after the introduction of legislated human rights, pay equity and employment standards protections.
- women are still getting paid less than men...
- They are still under-represented on boards...
- And they are still being overlooked for advancement and training opportunities.

Why? Because stereotypes about women and work still exist.

- Women don't want the leadership positions...
- They don't get paid the same as men because they don't ask...
- Their family obligations make them less focussed.
- Sure, women have babies – but families have children.

It's time for employers to do some hard work to get to where they need to be.

- We hear all kinds of talk about labour shortages, the need for soft skills and the importance of innovation...
- And I think most of us already have bought in to the idea that workplace diversity and inclusion is one of the most effective ways of addressing these issues.
- I was at the launch last week of the Board of Trade's *Scorecard on Prosperity*....
- TO is compared in size to Boston and Seattle. Interestingly both of those jurisdictions have voluntarily begun to tackle the causes of the gender wage gap by engaging with their business communities to come up with solutions.

Today's panelists have done a lot of work around including women and other groups of people at work

- They know that the attractive, sustainable workplaces of tomorrow will understand the significant advantages that come from embracing diversity and integrating diversity principles as core business priorities.
- And they've seen the results.

- My hope is that you leave here today inspired, and armed with some tools (and having made some connections) that will help you and your organization make the culture shift towards gender equality for women at work.

I am now going to turn the discussion over to our moderator, Janet McFarland.

- Since joining the Globe and Mail in 1995, Janet has written extensively on issues of governance, leadership, women in business and executive compensation.
- She also covers securities industry regulation and enforcement, including activities of the Ontario Securities Commission.
- Janet is a graduate of the London School of Economics and has received a number of awards for her work, including two National Newspaper Awards for business reporting.
- She has been nominated for two other NNA awards and has received three nominations for Michener Awards granted annually by Canada's Governor General to recognize excellence in public service journalism.
- Please help me in welcoming Janet who will introduce our panellists.