



# WOMEN LEADERS OF NEW ASIA

Asia Society's Women Leaders of New Asia 2012 Summit Report  
Women Leaders Driving Asia's Rapid Growth

April 19 – 21, 2012

Shanghai & Zhenjiang

Jiangsu Province, People's Republic of China

SpencerStuart



Asia  
Society®

Women  
Leadership  
Initiative

---

## CO-ORGANIZERS



The Chinese People's Association  
for Friendship with Foreign Countries

---

## IN COLLABORATION WITH

Zhenjiang Municipal People's Government

Zhenjiang People's Association  
for Friendship with Foreign Countries

---

## SPECIAL SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Zhenjiang Women's Federation

Foreign Affairs Office of  
Zhenjiang Municipal People's Government

---

## WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

Jiangsu Provincial Women's Federation

Shanghai Women's Federation



---

## LEAD SPONSOR



---

## WITH FUNDING FROM



---

## SUPPORTERS



Blanchette Hooker  
Rockefeller Foundation

---

## KNOWLEDGE PARTNER



---

## CONTRIBUTORS



Jiangsu Jianhua  
Concrete Pile Co., Ltd



Jiangsu Zhenbang Group

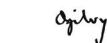
---

## MEDIA PARTNER



---

## PUBLIC RELATIONS PARTNER



Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide

## About the Summit

The Asia Society's 2012 Women Leaders of New Asia Summit, *Women Leaders Driving Asia's Rapid Growth*, brought together top business leaders and government figures from around the world to examine how women are shaping and being shaped by this growth. After first gathering in Shanghai for the release of a report on the state of women leaders in the Asia Pacific region, the Summit moved to nearby Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province. Participants discussed the challenges facing women in a rapidly changing landscape; explored research on key issues confronting women's leadership; shared best practices; and developed actionable items for moving the regional discussion forward.

The Women Leaders of New Asia 2012 Summit was co-organized by the Asia Society and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), and in collaboration with the People's Municipal Government of Zhenjiang.

## About Asia Society

Asia Society is the leading global organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders and institutions of Asia and the United States. We seek to enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression and generate new ideas across the fields of policy, business, education, arts and culture. Founded in 1956, Asia Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational institution with offices in Hong Kong, Houston, Korea, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Shanghai and Washington, D.C. Asia Society is on the web at [www.AsiaSociety.org](http://www.AsiaSociety.org).

## Foreword

The Asia Society's Women Leaders of New Asia initiative was created with the goal of examining the status of women's leadership in the Asia-Pacific region and better understanding the challenges as well as opportunities presented by the region's rapidly changing cultural, economic, political, and social landscapes for women. Three years on, these challenges were borne out in a new research report, *Rising to the Top? A Report on Women's Leadership in Asia*, conducted jointly by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and the Asia Society, released at the 2012 summit during our opening event in Shanghai.

Moving on from Shanghai to Zhenjiang, the focus of the 2012 Summit, *Women Leaders Driving Asia's Rapid Growth*, sought to examine how women are shaping and being shaped by this growth. We viewed this through the lens of rapidly evolving urban centers outside of the major metropolitan cities in Asia. We then took a deeper dive into issues such as women at the bottom of the pyramid, women as leaders and consumers, and the need for balancing multiple roles, among other pertinent issues. Many thanks to our many partners and supporters.

Over 400 leaders strong, our Women Leaders of New Asia Initiative is now poised to take the next steps and focus on strategies to transform ideas generated at the Summits and in the reports into impactful actionable agendas in the coming years. We can and must do a better job of utilizing the growing cross-sectoral community and network of senior and emerging women leaders that we have developed to prepare women leaders to navigate the path to successful global leadership. Let us pledge to stay connected, collaborate, and catalyze our ideas into actionable items.

On behalf of my colleagues at the Asia Society, we look forward to building on past achievements as we continue down the path to an even more impactful future.

**Michael G. Kulma**

Executive Director, Global Leadership Initiatives  
Asia Society

Spencer Stuart was a proud knowledge partner of Asia Society's Women Leaders of New Asia 2012 Summit, *Women Leaders Driving Asia's Rapid Growth*. The event examined how women are rising in the ranks of business and government and shaping the growth of the quickly evolving urban settings outside Asia's major metropolitan areas, which are projected to be key players in the global economy over the next 15 years.

Given our presence in the region and witnessing firsthand the growing demand for top talent there, we understand the urgency of this conversation and, in order to spur further dialogue, have captured highlights from discussions on vital topics, including:

- The challenges facing women in a changing landscape
- Key issues confronting women's leadership
- Best practices to help women balance their multiple roles
- Next steps for moving the discussion forward and taking action

We applaud the Asia Society and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) for providing a platform for such an important issue and hope you find the following summary and insights valuable.

**Simon Fenton**

Managing Director – Asia Pacific  
Spencer Stuart

# Table of Contents

4	<b>Foreword</b>
7	<b>Agenda</b>
14	<b>Welcoming Remarks</b>
15	<b>Keynote Conversation</b>
16	Breakout Session <hr/> <b>Engaging Women at the Bottom of the Pyramid</b>
17	Breakout Session <hr/> <b>Women at the Heart of Rapid Economic Growth: As Leaders, As Consumers</b>
19	Plenary Session <hr/> <b>Perspectives from Jiangsu Province/Zhenjiang Municipality: Local Entrepreneurs at the Forefront of Economic Growth</b>
21	Plenary Session <hr/> <b>Unlocking the Potential of Women Leaders: The Role of Government</b>
22	Breakout Session <hr/> <b>Balancing Multiple Roles as a Key to Women in Leadership</b>
23	Breakout Session <hr/> <b>Women's Place in the New Center of Gravity for Global Growth</b>
24	Plenary Session <hr/> <b>Women, Tradition and the Pull of Asia's Rapid Modernization</b>
26	Plenary Session <hr/> <b>Meaningful Mentorship and Traditional Talent Development in Asia: Creating Women's Pathways to Global Leadership</b>
27	Concluding Session <hr/> <b>Catalyzing Ideas, Taking Action, Effecting Change</b>

# Agenda

**Thursday, April 19, 2012**

**9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Delegate Registration**

**2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Press Conference for The Asia Society's 2012 Women Leaders of New Asia Summit and the release of *Rising to the Top? A Report on Women's Leadership in Asia***

*Press Conference  
Speakers*

---

**Vishakha N. Desai**, President,  
Asia Society

**Zhang Guoyun**,  
Deputy Director,  
Foreign Affairs  
Office of Zhenjiang  
Municipal People's  
Government

*Report Program  
Speakers*

---

**Vishakha N. Desai**, President,  
Asia Society

**Astrid S. Tuminez**,  
Vice Dean  
(Research), Lee  
Kuan Yew School  
of Public Policy,  
National University  
of Singapore

**Jiao Yang**, Party  
Secretary-General,  
Shanghai Municipal  
Women's Federation

## Friday, April 20, 2012

8:30 – 8:50 a.m.

### VIP meeting with Zhenjiang Municipal Leaders

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.

### Welcoming Remarks

**Vishakha N. Desai**, President, Asia Society

**Lin Yi**, Secretary-General, Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries

**Zhu Xiaoming**, Acting Mayor, Zhenjiang Municipal People's Government

9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

### Keynote Conversation

#### **The Change-makers/Visionaries: Women Changing the Paradigm in a Rapidly Modernizing Asia**

##### *Speakers*

**Julie Bishop**,  
Shadow Minister,  
Foreign Affairs  
and Trade and  
Deputy Leader of  
the Opposition,  
Parliament of  
Australia

**Claire Huang**,  
Head of  
International  
Marketing and  
Corporate Affairs,  
Bank of America  
Merrill Lynch

**Jiao Yang**, Party  
Secretary-General,  
Shanghai Municipal  
Women's Federatio

##### *Moderator*

**Vishakha N.  
Desai**, President,  
Asia Society

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Breakout Sessions

#### **1. Engaging Women at the Bottom of the Pyramid**

##### *Speakers*

**Selima Ahmad**,  
Founder and  
President,  
Bangladesh  
Women Chamber  
of Commerce and  
Industry (BWCCI)

**Erna Witoelar**,  
Chair, Partnership  
for Governance  
Reform in Indonesia

**Wu Qing**, Founder,  
Beijing Cultural  
Development  
Center for Rural  
Women

##### *Moderator*

**Claire Huang**,  
Head of  
International  
Marketing and  
Communications,  
Bank of America  
Merrill Lynch



## 2. Women at the Heart of Rapid Economic Growth: As Leaders, As Consumers

### *Speakers*

**Georges Desvaux**,  
Managing Partner,  
McKinsey &  
Company

**Lyn Kok**, President  
and Chief Executive  
Officer, Standard  
Chartered Bank  
(Thailand)

**Sabrina Lin**,  
Managing Director,  
Asia Pacific,  
Japan & Greater  
China Marketing  
Organization, Cisco

### *Moderator*

**Claire Chiang**,  
Senior Vice  
President, Banyan  
Tree Holdings  
Limited

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

## Plenary Session 2

### Perspectives from Jiangsu Province/Zhenjiang Municipality: Local Entrepreneurs at the Forefront of Economic Growth

### *Speakers*

**Fan Daoquin**, Vice  
General Manager,  
Jiangsu Shengbang  
Furniture  
Manufacturing Co.  
Ltd.

**Li Ming**, General  
Manager, Jiangsu  
Huayang Pipe &  
Fittings Co. Ltd.

**Ma Jinfang**,  
President, Yihe Co.  
Ltd.

**Tang Jimei**,  
General Manager,  
Jiangsu Shengmei  
Industrial  
Technology Group  
Co. Ltd.

**Yu Xiaqiu**,  
President,  
Changjiang Runfa  
Group Co.

**Zhang Jingxia**,  
President, Jiangsu  
Women's Federation

### *Moderator*

**Yu Jinhong**,  
Anchorwoman,  
Zhenjiang TV Station

**2:00 – 3:15 p.m.**

**Plenary Session 3**

**Unlocking the Potential of Women Leaders: The Role of Government**

*Speakers*

---

**Henedina Razon Abad,**  
Member, House of Representatives,  
Philippines

**Donya Aziz,**  
Member, National Assembly of  
Pakistan

**Juree Vichit-Vadakan,**  
Chairperson, Center for Philanthropy and  
Civil Society

*Moderator*

---

**Farah Pandith,**  
Special Representative to Muslim  
Communities, U.S. Department of  
State

**3:15 – 3:45 p.m.**

**Art Insight**

**Zhu Zheqin (Dadawa),** Music  
Artist, Founder of “Show the World”  
Goodwill Action

3:45 – 5:00 p.m.

## Breakout Sessions

### 1. Balancing Multiple Roles as a Key to Women's Leadership

#### *Speakers*

**Attiya Inayatullah,**  
Member, National  
Assembly of  
Pakistan

**Diana Li,** CEO,  
Yurong Corp.

**Nobuko Nagase,**  
Professor of  
Economics,  
Department of  
Social Sciences  
and Family Studies,  
Ochanomizu  
University, Tokyo

#### *Moderator*

**Alice Au,** Head of  
the Private Equity  
Practice, Asia  
Pacific, Spencer  
Stuart

### 2. Women's Place in the New Center of Gravity for Global Growth: Beyond the Major Metropolitan Areas

#### *Speakers*

**Undraa  
Agvaanluvsan,**  
Advisor, Minister  
of Energy and  
Mineral Resources,  
Mongolia

**Wu Yanmei,**  
Secretary of CPC  
Branch, Zhenjiang  
Jingkou District,  
Xiangshan Town Jiu  
Lijie Community

**Zhang Ying,**  
President,  
Tianjin Northern  
International Group

#### *Moderator*

**Rhodora Palomar-  
Fresnedi,** Head,  
Unilab Foundation

## Saturday, April 21, 2012

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

### Plenary Session 4

#### Women, Tradition, and the Pull of Asia's Rapid Modernization

---

##### *Speakers*

**Barbara Watson Andaya**, Professor of Asian Studies, University of Hawaii, Tan Chin Tuan Visiting Professor National University of Singapore

**Ambica Shrestha**, President, Dwarika's Hotels and Resorts

**Yu Xiaoqi**, Assistant Professor, Jiangsu University

---

##### *Moderator*

**Astrid S. Tuminez**, Vice Dean (Research), Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

10:15 – 10:45 a.m.

### Art Insight

**Almagul Menlibayeva**, Artist and Member, Union of Artists of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Priska C. Juschka Fine Art

10:45 – 12:00pm

## Plenary Session 5

### Meaningful Mentorship & Traditional Talent Development in Asia: Creating Women's Pathways to Global Leadership

#### *Speakers*

---

**Min Chen,**  
Managing Director,  
Head of China Real  
Estate & Lodging,  
Head of Asia  
Corporate Finance,  
Bank of America  
Merrill Lynch

**Ton Nu Thi Ninh,**  
Director, Tri Viet  
Center for Social  
and Educational  
Research

**Zhou Weijing,**  
Professor, Jiangsu  
Science and Tech  
University

#### *Moderator*

---

**Deborah M. Soon,** Senior Vice  
President, Strategy  
and Marketing,  
Catalyst

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

## Concluding Session

### Catalyzing Ideas, Taking Action, Effecting Change

**Vishakha N. Desai,** President,  
Asia Society

**Astrid S. Tuminez,**  
Vice Dean  
(Research), Lee  
Kuan Yew School  
of Public Policy,  
National University  
of Singapore

**Lin Yi,** Secretary-  
General,  
Chinese People's  
Association for  
Friendship with  
Foreign Countries

Friday, April 20, 2012

## Welcoming Remarks



As **Vishakha N. Desai**, Asia Society President, expressed at the meeting's commencement, the purpose of the summit was to create a community of women leaders (as well as men in support of women's advancement) to not only discuss issues, but also translate the dialogue into concrete action. In the welcoming remarks, she outlined three key points underpinning what was coined the summit's "action agenda":

- The role of women as shapers of the economy: How the economy is affected by women serving as leaders at work and within the family
- The effect of cultural perspectives: How the spoken and unspoken cultural attitudes toward traditionally female and male jobs can both halt or spur women's progress
- The power of personal growth and mentorship/ community building: Once women become leaders, what are their responsibilities to their communities and other women?



**Zhu Xiaoming**, acting mayor of Zhenjiang Municipal People's Government, spoke at the event.

## The Change-makers/Visionaries: Women Changing the Paradigm in a Rapidly Modernizing Asia

**Vishakha N. Desai** moderated the keynote discussion, which included **Jiao Yang**, Party Secretary-General of Shanghai Municipal Women's Federation; **Claire Huang**, Head of International Marketing and Corporate Affairs at Bank of America Merrill Lynch; and **Julie Bishop**, Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and deputy leader of the Opposition in the Parliament of Australia. The group discussed the major challenges facing women in Asia today and the role of women leaders in the region's rapid modernization.

The keynote discussion raised a number of provocative points about some of the biggest hurdles for women. At times, women themselves can be the most significant obstacle to success, and one participant said they must resist the "Daddy's Girl Syndrome" of simply hoping others will take notice of their achievements. Instead, they must network and balance listening with vocalizing issues of importance and their own accomplishments. Attitude and self-confidence are integral to these efforts, especially in the face of challenges such as cultural forces, institutional barriers and internal doubts. Another



Audience members listen to the keynote discussion, featuring (from left), Asia Society President **Vishakha N. Desai**, **Julie Bishop**, Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament of Australia, **Claire Huang**, Head of International Marketing and Corporate Affairs at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and **Jiao Yang**, Party Secretary-General of Shanghai Municipal Women's Federation.

participant gave the "pencil analogy"—although painful "sharpening" can hurt, women will become "sharper" and better prepared through those difficult learning experiences and leave their mark.

It was also noted that women should not wait to be inspired, but be inspirational themselves. Having a solid goal can help women stay motivated in the face of adversity and not be deterred from pursuit of the greater end by small hiccups along the way. In addition, visible,

symbolic action can encourage other women to follow suit.

The panel remarked that it is equally important to raise one's voice in support of other women, and act as advocates and mentors for each other. On the greater economic stage, mentorship will be especially important in China, considering how

the country's economic growth will center on the service industry, which is dominated by women. Additionally, when women receive mentorship, training and guidance, they demonstrate significant tangible results.

Teamwork transcends varying political views and different backgrounds, with



Joined by **Claire Huang**, (at far right), **Julie Bishop**, responds to a question posed by **Vishakha N. Desai** (far left).

women coming together and generating results in their communities, from fighting corruption to driving investment in vital public services such as education and access to water.

Sponsorship also works well, provided women have advocates. Sponsorship is similar to mentorship in that a senior leader speaks on the behalf of an up-and-coming professional, but instead of the close, intimate relationship inherent in mentoring, sponsorship is a bit more detached. A sponsor is senior enough to have a higher level view on the work scene, and is knowledgeable and confident enough of the individual's reputation, skills and ability to speak about them and fight for opportunities. This requires less of a one-on-one time commitment, and is convenient in helping a

larger group of women. What it lacks in intimacy and nuance, it makes up for in scale and scope.

Women cannot be the only ones responsible for their advancement. Men must share in efforts toward gender equality and empowerment, panelists said. The shift in the workplace dynamic must also translate at home, according to the panel. Many women in Asia find themselves operating under split personalities: At work, they must present themselves in a gender-neutral manner, but at home, they must play the role of the traditional wife and mother. Legislation can only generate so much progress toward gender equality. Women must continue to challenge this dichotomy and possess the confidence to pursue and achieve their goals.

#### Breakout Session

---

## Engaging Women at the Bottom of the Pyramid

An important question that leaders face when tackling women's rights is how to engage those women at the bottom of the pyramid. **Selima Ahmad**, Founder and President of the Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry; **Erna Witoelar**, Chair of the Partnership for Governance and Reform in Indonesia; and **Wu Qing**, founder of the Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women; shared their views with moderator **Claire Huang**, Head of International Marketing and Corporate Affairs for Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

The panel opened the session by questioning the framing of the topic itself. By using the expression "women at the bottom of the pyramid," there is a risk of overlooking the fundamental role women have always played in society, even in the poorest communities. It is important to remember that women's rights are not a special issue, but above all else a human rights issue and should be upheld in the same manner. Moreover, it can be counterproductive to think of development in terms of knowledge and resource transfers from the top to the bottom of the pyramid. The road to women's empowerment, and development in

general, should be marked by a two-way learning process. Every speaker offered examples of how they were inspired by people they were helping, from persistent students and waste recycling plant workers to women entrepreneurs who lifted their whole family out of poverty after being given a baby cow.

In considering the question, it might be better to think of the gap that prevents men and women living in poverty from taking full advantage of their abilities. The role of "bridging leaders," those active in the space between the bottom of the pyramid and policy-makers, is crucial in promoting the movement of talent as well as communication between the top and the bottom. These intermediaries can be found in the fields of media, academia, NGOs and include men as well as women. They are able to raise awareness and find practical solutions.

Awareness and advocacy is particularly important because of its effect on policy. In countries like Bangladesh, having equal rights from a legal standpoint is not enough because of



discriminatory attitudes and inequality at home. As a consequence, there is a real need for policy to bridge the gap and promote equality.

As women who are passionate and active in trying to improve the lives of others, the panelists also discussed the attitudes of those members of society who are indifferent and what strategies can be used to engage them. Education was deemed crucial. While literacy is fundamental, it is also important to promote civic responsibility and engage women about global issues including environmental policy, conflict resolution and education policy. Women are generally more likely than men to influence their families, for example, by working to ensure that their children attend school. What distinguishes us as humans is our ability to recognize that the welfare of others beyond our family affects us as well. If we look on and do nothing while others lose their liberties, it

will be only a matter of time before our rights are infringed upon as well. Finally, it is important to recognize that even when altruism is not enough of a motivation, true leaders should not shy away from using selfish goals, such as “it will make you look good” or “it will benefit you” in order to push more people to do good.

Positive female role models are also a particularly effective instrument in promoting women’s rights. One participant remembered her mother, an important Chinese feminist who was a personal inspiration to her, as well as Eleanor Roosevelt, whose international engagement and role in promoting human rights should be a lesson to us all. Another participant explained that she always tells members of her organization that nothing she has achieved is impossible for them. If she can be seen as a success story, so can they.

#### Breakout Session

---

## Women at the Heart of Rapid Economic Growth: As Leaders, As Consumers

According to a United Nations Development Program report cited in *Rising to the Top? A Report on Women’s Leadership in Asia*,<sup>1</sup> limits on women’s participation in the workforce cost the Asia Pacific an estimated \$89 billion (U.S.) per year. With projections of middle-class consumer spending in emerging markets nearly tripling to \$20 trillion by 2020 and a growing talent shortfall, Asia simply cannot afford to let women sit on the sidelines.

Moderated by **Claire Chiang**, Senior Vice President of Banyan Tree Holdings, panelists **Georges Desvaux**, Managing Partner at McKinsey & Company in Japan; **Lyn Kok**, President and CEO of Standard Chartered Bank in Thailand; and **Sabrina Lin**, Managing Director of Cisco’s Asia Pacific, Japan and Greater China marketing organization, came together to discuss:

- How women are shaping the economy and how they are being shaped by it
- How Asian women are contributing to new patterns of consumerism
- How the retail and banking sectors are accommodating women’s growing purchasing power and changing lifestyles
- How Asian women entrepreneurs can maximize their impact

If Asia is going to meet the economic demands of tomorrow, panelists agreed that there must be a rapid change in the acceleration of the advancement of women. They stated that government, businesses and society as a whole must make the advancement of women a visible senior leadership issue. Women constitute only 6 percent of the Asian executive community and,

<sup>1</sup> Tuminez, Astrid S., “Rising to the Top? A Report on Women’s Leadership in Asia,” Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, April 2012.

without intervention, that figure will shift only at a glacial pace. Dedicated programs (e.g., institutional structures and process) and other actions such as mentorship and sponsorship can increase female representation in the top echelons of business and government as well as help to curtail the “pipeline leakage” of women. Pipeline leakage refers to the loss of women as they progress in their careers. Early in their careers, men and women are almost equally represented, but over time women are “leaking out” due to family obligations, whereas men continue unhindered. As a result, women are increasingly underrepresented at higher levels.

One participant noted her company offers formal and informal structures to promote women in leadership, including its advisory group, networking groups within various countries and a shadowing program. The panel also remarked that men can be champions of change, helping to stave off pipeline leakage and ensure women are represented at the top. One delegate who works at a leading accounting firm observed that there is an erosion of women and that companies need to motivate them to remain in their positions. According to one of the panelists, companies such as hers have made efforts to retain women, including removing requirements for senior-level professionals to be willing to move to other countries, providing flex-hours and offering a sabbatical program.

But ultimately, women must take ownership of the issue and increase their risk appetite if there is to be a paradigm shift. For example, mentoring can help women to “think big” in their goals. In addition, women help create social change by becoming more discerning consumers and only supporting companies that help women.

Quota systems remain extremely controversial, but some acknowledged they could serve as a potential solution if employers believed they would actually be enforced. Proponents argued that positive results compensate for the downsides of the system. Even the mere fear of quotas

can help, citing France as an example, and that any measures for inclusion (inspired by fear or otherwise) must be visibly supported by senior management to be successful.

It was suggested that organizations need to institutionalize women's presence to enable their success, such as having aspirational targets (rather than quotas — which senior women tend to find insulting) such as 32 percent of female representation in mid-level roles and 22 percent at the top level or requiring at least one female candidate in a given pool, even if she is not chosen for the role.

Others believe such measures can be self-defeating — if the ultimate goal is true gender equality and representation in organizations, a mandate could undermine the very cultural mindset shift needed to reach this objective. Quota systems may turn female representation into a matter of compliance that, as one audience member pointed out, let organizations (and men) “off the hook” in terms of proactively pursuing social and institutional change.

As organizational practices continue to evolve, women must become better marketers of themselves and learn how to convey their experiences in compelling ways not only to rise in the ranks, but also to discredit the notion that in their success is the result of affirmative action. And self-confidence is the linchpin for women making their case. One speaker cited a Harvard Business School study that showed the disparity in confidence between genders, with 80 percent of men saying they are qualified for a position and the same percentage of women saying that they are not qualified.

Yet success in the workplace is only one facet of life for many working women. The often touted concept of “work-life balance” spurred an interesting dialogue. “I have four kids and lots of people ask, ‘How can you have four kids and still have a job?’” said one participant. “I don’t agree with work-life balance, but instead made

choices.” Namely, she chose to have her first child during her dissertation, worked at home with her second child and leaned on a network of

people who could help her fulfill her personal and professional roles.

## Plenary Session

### Perspectives from Jiangsu Province/Zhenjiang Municipality: Local Entrepreneurs at the Forefront of Economic Growth

Although many of the issues women face in the professional world and in greater society are universal, specific environments can also shape their experiences and opportunities. For instance, do women in Jiangsu Province/Zhenjiang Municipality encounter different challenges than those confronted by their counterparts in larger metropolitan areas? Are companies in smaller towns or provinces more likely to adapt their corporate philosophies according to the local customs and, therefore, are they more willing to invest in women-specific corporate social responsibility programs?

Women leaders in local businesses lent their perspectives about the role of gender in leadership and how they can lead in society — regardless of their location — and at home. Anchorwoman **Yu Jinhong** moderated the discussion with **Fan Daoquin**, Vice General Manager at Jiangsu Shengbang Furniture Manufacturing Co. Ltd.; **Li Ming**, General Manager of Jiangsu Huayang Pipe & Fittings Co. Ltd.; **Ma Jinfang**, President of Yihe Co. Ltd.; **Tang Jimei**, General Manager of Jiangsu Shengmei Industrial Technology Group Co. Ltd.; **Yu Xiaqiu**, President of Changjiang Runfa Group Co. Ltd.; and **Zhang Jingxia**, President of Jiangsu Women’s Federation.



**Yu Jinhong** moderated the discussion with **Fan Daoquin**, Vice General Manager at Jiangsu Shengbang Furniture Manufacturing Co. Ltd.; **Li Ming**, General Manager of Jiangsu Huayang Pipe & Fittings Co. Ltd.; **Ma Jinfang**, President of Yihe Co. Ltd.; **Tang Jimei**, General Manager of Jiangsu Shengmei Industrial Technology Group Co. Ltd.; **Yu Xiaqiu**, President of Changjiang Runfa Group Co. Ltd.; and **Zhang Jingxia**, President of Jiangsu Women’s Federation.

These local leaders observed that female executives have a strong sense of social responsibility, with one panelist noting that a large portion of her organization’s profits are returned to society. The assistance to business women at every level creates a win-win situation for all involved. Beyond contributing funds to the community, organizations such as the Jiangsu Women’s Federation are effective because they organize training, build a sense of community

among women, create a platform for female entrepreneurs, support female academics and help battle institutional barriers and bottlenecks with a focus on finance. Mentorship efforts, such as the Federation’s “one to five” approach (one business mentor for every five female graduates) helps groom the next generation of women business leaders.

Another panelist noted that focusing on traditional business pillars like brand management, strong manufacturing practices and innovation can also pave the way to success, just as it has for her company, which has shared its success with the community. One attendee said that her organization specializes in recruiting laid-off female workers because the company believes it has a social responsibility, a belief shared by many speakers.

Support for women can become all the more important for those working in fields in which females are in the minority. With women making up half of her company's senior management team, one participant noted that the progress that has been made in her predominantly male-dominated industry stems from women having passion for the work.

Women also can have a profound impact outside the walls of their organizations. Women wield tremendous influence over three generations as a daughter, wife and mother; given their far-reaching impact, it is therefore imperative that women are provided with a good education. Success at work is perceived as irrelevant if a woman "fails" at home and her children are not

successful. Each generation always wants the next generation to be more successful than the previous one.

The traits that beget success professionally may not translate in the home, where softness of spirit and appearance are often still valued. The discussion called into question the broader issue of traditional gender roles, as well as the historical preoccupation with female beauty. Physical appearance remains a dominant force in today's world, but women can take charge in redefining beauty. One delegate argued against feeling pressured to become "tough." Balancing personal and professional roles will likely remain an ongoing issue for women, and one participant offered another definition of beauty for consideration: "Work is beautiful. You can be a successful leader and be beautiful."



**Ma Jinfang**, President of Yihe Co. Ltd., with **Selima Ahmad** and **Sabina Alam**.



**Vishakha N. Desai** and **Ma Jinfang** display work from a local entrepreneur.

## Unlocking the Potential of Women Leaders: The Role of Government

**Farah Pandith**, Special Representative to Muslim Communities with the U.S. Department of State, moderated the discussion with **Donya Aziz**, member of the National Assembly of Pakistan; **Juree Vichit-Vadakan**, Chairperson, Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society; and **Henedina Razon Abad**, Member of the Philippines House of Representatives; to consider the way government uses its power for the advancement of women, from instituting policies that hold companies accountable to adopting existing policy models that promote women's progress.

The crux of the women advancement issue is the resistance to changing the status quo. A philosophical discussion with political implications is the redefinition of "normal" by both women and governments. Government can help lead the charge against prejudiced institutions and beliefs and adjust the current value system by reframing the issues, but legislation can only go so far.

Redefining normal and challenging the status quo requires dedication and commitment — discrimination is the result of structural inertia and long-standing history. Although powerful rhetoric is an inspirational tool, panelists were quick to add that oratory must be translated into action. Further, the results of action must be fully evaluated. Material growth can often mask unequal treatment and, therefore, models of development need to be carefully examined and take into account the many facets of progress.

The average (female) citizen can take advantage of current societal shifts and continue the momentum. Half of the planet's population is younger than 30, 80 percent of the population owns a cell phone and, if Facebook were a country, it would be the third-largest nation. In a technologically savvy age with an increasingly empowered youth population, media can be a

valuable tool for monitoring and ensuring goals are achieved, helping to keep the government and companies accountable as well as to encourage dialogue and transform a country's collective mindset. For instance, half of Pakistan is under the age of 18 and the interconnectedness brought on by technology means youth know more about civic issues and want more change from government. The Arab Spring movement is a testament to the power of social media in driving political change.

Progress has been made in terms of education for women, but the current value system continues to hold women back. Government can spur additional curriculum change (i.e., using books in the classroom that promote equality) and ensure teachers are egalitarian in their assignments of roles to male and female students. Parents need to nurture girls and create an atmosphere of equal sharing in the household, especially in an environment in which she says the aspiration for too many rural girls is to become the wives of foreign men.

Girls also need visible role models, but as one pointed out, "We don't hear enough about women in public service." Another said she believes the role of women in positions of prominence poses a fundamental challenge: Is it enough to have women in power? What else can we do so that they make a difference?

Increasing women's presence in foreign service and public policy has been a priority of the Obama administration, one panelist noted, and is a practice that can be and has been adopted around the world. Audience members weighed in on ways other governments are helping women, including increased penalties in Bangladesh for crimes against women, more balanced representation of women on Norwegian boards, revision of the



inheritance law in India and measures reversing gender imbalance in South Korean laws.

It's also important to note that a new definition of "normal" may not have universal meaning. As one person put it, "Normal should be what you want it to be. It should be what makes you

happy, ethical, responsible and moral. Normal does not necessarily mean the status quo."

As for government, its place is not to define "normal," but to give women the choice to define it for themselves and provide fairer access to opportunities for everyone.

## Breakout Session

---

### Balancing Multiple Roles as a Key to Women's Leadership

Although men are rarely confronted with making a choice between professional, social and personal responsibilities, a recurring theme throughout the summit was how women balance their numerous roles, especially in light of women's increasing ascension into positions of leadership. Depending on the stage of development, certain Asian societies can compound the challenge for women striving to break from their traditional roles.

**Alice Au**, Head of the Private Equity Practice, Asia Pacific, Spencer Stuart, facilitated a discussion about how women can juggle their many roles. She was joined by **Attiya Inayatullah**, Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, **Nobuko Nagase**, Professor of Economics, Department of Social Sciences and Family Studies, Ochanomizu University in Tokyo, and **Diana Li**, CEO of Yurong Corp.

The first step is to respect each role you have as a woman and give each aspect its due consideration. The coordination of a woman's multiple responsibilities can be likened to the role of a conductor, creating a symphony of a better present and a secure future. Women do not always have to straddle multiple roles — it is possible to be happy in only one role. One participant stated that happiness is a formula of "have" and "desire," explaining that as long as you grasp your identity and what you want, you can design your own path to happiness.

External barriers exist on the path to internal contentment. One participant said that when she graduated in the 1980s, there was no equal standing with men — women were solely expected to be good mothers. However, she wanted to be both a professional and a mother, an uphill battle at the time. She began her career in banking, where her employers did not offer childcare leave, and realized she did not have a future with these types of organizations. She then chose to pursue her doctorate degree and struggled with the decision to put her children in daycare, a decision which bothered her in-laws. Some elements of that stifling environment have remained 30 years later and a gender gap still exists for women without children as well.

Although it remains challenging to balance career and home, another participant offered a fitting analogy: "Work is one leg, family is another and together, you can walk toward happiness and success." She noted how her family's support was integral in her accepting her current leadership position and that, thanks to their encouragement, she was able to fulfill the dreams she had since she was 17 years old. Yet, she said that she quickly switches between her professional and personal roles. "When I get home, I immediately change my clothes," she said, noting how clothing changes her mindset. "Being 'hard' works in the professional world, but doesn't necessarily work in family." However, the

foundation of her success in both roles is her contentment with and pride in herself.

Belief in one's self and maintaining a commitment to one's priorities are integral to achieving personal happiness as well as other goals. One participant offered this advice: Be mindful of the three E's, energy, enthusiasm and the most important attribute, empathy. She noted that traits (like the three E's) that make an individual successful in her career can support a healthy home life, such as being an effective communicator and tempering emotional responses. In the pursuit of perfection, another panelist cautioned against women's resultant guilt

when that unattainable goal cannot be reached.

The panelists also discussed the inverse of the age-old maxim: Behind every good woman is a good man. Among the many tips shared, one suggested was that rather than treating men as the competition, women should strive to work with them and welcome the support of their fathers, husbands and sons. The support of even a few can have wide-reaching results.

Ultimately, being a leader is not about status, but about using one's power to influence others, from family and communities to companies and greater society.

---

#### Breakout Session

## Women's Place in the New Center of Gravity for Global Growth: Beyond the Major Metropolitan Areas

**Undraa Agvaanluvsan**, Advisor to the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of Mongolia; **Wu Yanmei**, Secretary of CPC Branch for Xiangshan Town Jiu Lijie Community in Zhenjiang Jingkou District; and **Zhang Ying**, President of Tianjin Northern International Group joined moderator **Rhodora Palomar-Fresnedi**, the Head of Unilab Foundation; for a discussion on the position of women in a quickly evolving economy that is rapidly moving beyond major cities and affecting rural areas and non-service economy jobs as well.

Panelists addressed the lack of talent that is affecting several sectors in countries such as China. As more women obtain higher qualifications and are supported by wealthier families, they have the option to choose more desirable jobs in the service economy. While the war for talent is often discussed in relation to elite professions, this is an issue affecting lower-level jobs as well. Factories and other

businesses deemed relatively unattractive are struggling to draw and retain workers. For instance, Mongolia, which has been capitalizing on its rich natural resources over the past 20 years, feels the talent shortage acutely. In addition, foreign aid and the study of foreign countries with similar economic structures has been instrumental in promoting education and the introduction of new institutions, allowing more women to rise to the top.

Most importantly, the conversation focused on what is holding women back in the workplace, and possible solutions to the gender inequality often found there. Many women struggle with balancing family and work. Thus, it is paramount that governments create policies to address these challenges. Women in lower-level jobs may be more likely to leave the workforce to attend to their families than those with positions of greater responsibility. Moreover, women often feel pressured to focus on their families

and marriages in their late 20s or early 30s, a time that is crucial to one's career development. Both of these observations point to the vicious circle that stops women from growing in the workplace and ascending to higher-level positions.

Some positive changes have been taking place; one example offered was the growing number of women in some Chinese local government bodies. Yet, the debate continues to unfold across the globe and it remains as important as ever to continue and explore new ways to promote women in the workplace in a changing economy.

## Plenary Session

### Women, Tradition and the Pull of Asia's Rapid Modernization

Are tradition and women's progress mutually exclusive? Or can Asia's rich cultural traditions and modernization co-exist? Could tradition prove, in fact, to be a valuable tool to create opportunities for women?

**Astrid S. Tuminez**, Vice Dean of Research at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore, moderated this session to

discuss the dichotomy of tradition and modernity when it comes to the advancement of women. Participants included: **Barbara Watson Andaya**, Professor of Asian Studies at University of Hawaii and Tan Chin Tuan Visiting Professor at the National University of Singapore, **Ambica Shrestha** President of Dwarika's Hotels and Resorts in Nepal, and **Yu Xiaoqi**, Assistant Professor at Jiangsu University.

One panelist has found that the gender gap has been less drastic in Southeast Asia compared to the rest of Asia or other regions throughout the world. She specified that though it is difficult to generalize across such a wide swath of countries, food production, marketing and domestic economy are areas that have traditionally contributed to this smaller gender gap. She noted that one of the common elements throughout



Plenary session panelist **Barbara Watson Andaya**, Professor of Asian Studies at University of Hawaii and Tan Chin Tuan Visiting Professor at the National University of Singapore, with **Ann Morfogen**, **Judy Chen** and **Rhodora Palomar-Fresnedi**.

the region is the need for women in these critical areas; in several cases, it is absolutely necessary for women to equally contribute and play an active role in the work force. The lack of government attention and available resources has meant that sidelining women would be innately foolish and potentially detrimental to society.

A second, and related, element is the idea of respect. Women enjoy a slightly elevated status given the matrilineal lines prevalent in the region. Furthermore, since women play so many important roles in the workplace in addition to acting as spiritual leaders, they enjoy a sense of respect that strengthens their status in society. The various roles and responsibilities help rather than hinder women in Southeast Asian societies, because they are respected. These women are valued for their efforts and acknowledged for their contributions, which directly affects the existence and scope of the gender gap.

Change has also come to Nepal as it abolished its Hindu monarchy and became a republic in 2006 after years of violent conflict. The insurgency directly affects women and that, during war, men disappear to fight and women and children are



the ones who suffer most. While Nepal remains an intensely religious society with women holding lower social standing than men, the status quo is gradually shifting.

For example, migration to rural areas has helped advance women as they are the breadwinners and heads of family in these locations she said. In addition, women are becoming more confident in taking on new responsibilities, such as plowing fields, and barriers to education for girls are being removed. Tradition and the concept of family remains strong in spite of modernization, but there is a growing trend toward married women breaking away from their husbands' families — the panelist herself being one of them, after her supportive and progressive husband asked her to leave the family with him, a request that is typically unheard of in Nepal.

Reform in China has been different from movements in other Asian countries because of the nation's rapid pace of modernization 30 years ago. The faster that reform occurs, the more unstable it is. Although the development of women typically stems from within a country, there is not a sharp distinction between tradition and modernization in China. For instance, in academia, women receive respect from male colleagues, but in informal settings such as lunch breaks, they are expected to play the role of the traditional woman, reminding them to drink more water and smoke less. Interestingly, in traditional home life, women wield the economic power and companies market to them with the knowledge that they make the financial decisions for the household.

However, delegates argued that the notion of women being truly decision-makers at home is a fallacy and that men still have the final say in large purchases, highlighting the vast differences in opinion that can reside even within the same nation. According to one participant, women have more power in the southern part of the country, whereas the northern part remains more restrictive.

The delegates raised another area where messaging falls short of reality: divorce. The divorce rate has risen in recent years as old social stigmas against the dissolution of marriage have faded. However, one speaker said that although on paper, women have enough protections in the case of divorce, the existing legal protections are not enough.

The role of men in challenging tradition was also a point of debate. One participant said a husband's support is vital when combating social stigmas. Others countered that women can ascend on their own, and that support systems can come in many forms besides spouses, especially in the younger generation.

Emotional support is vital and even potentially life-saving, especially considering that China has the highest suicide rate in the world for rural women, whose lifelong social ties are often severed upon getting married and moving to remote locations. Thus, women should work together to provide each other support. There is evidence of the power of female collaboration: The group of women who received an award after uniting to reverse Nepal's high infant and mother mortality rates.

But the point was made that women do not have to initiate huge movements to elicit change. They can influence their families and the mainstream perception when they are able, and seize opportunities to even when they come from men.

Despite progress on many fronts, there is a perceived dark side of modernization: the dogged pursuit of consumer goods. To illustrate the issue, one individual gave the example of Indonesian teenagers who will go without food in order to buy jeans due to the pervasive preoccupation with brand names. It will take a multi-pronged approach (home, school and media) to counteract the powerful lure of consumerism in Asian youth.

Some participants said that traditional elements of the culture can offset some of the more negative effects of modernization, including the growing demand for material goods. Commitment to society and responsibility to others are traditional foundations that can be preserved. On the path to modernization, the participants identified some end goals that would not lose sight of important and long-held priorities:

- A society that cares about the individual and the group
- Villages that flourish economically as greatly as cities
- Increased focus on small and midsize enterprises
- Communication with other women to build networks
- Commitment to applying an Eastern point of view, rather than a Western one, to examine issues in Asia

---

#### Plenary Session

## Meaningful Mentorship and Traditional Talent Development in Asia: Creating Women's Pathways to Global Leadership

**Deborah M. Soon**, Senior Vice President of Strategy and Marketing at Catalyst, moderated a discussion about the hallmarks of successful mentorship programs and their impact on women with **Min Chen**, Managing Director and Head of China Real Estate & Lodging, and Head of Asia Corporate Finance at Bank of America Merrill Lynch; **Ton Nu Thi Ninh**, Director, Tri Viet Center for Social and Educational Research; and **Zhou Weijing**, Professor at Jiangsu Science and Tech University.

The diverse panel outlined ways in which mentorship is most successful. While mentorship in the workplace remains important for women who received encouragement from an early age, it can be especially powerful for those who lacked adequate support and must now navigate the professional world.

However, mentorship should not be cast merely as a nebulous concept. Meaningful mentorship is the pathway to modernity. Mentorship is most successful when it is carefully crafted and is both culture- and situation-specific and not the result of a patronage system, which tends to be more prevalent than in the West. One speaker reiterated the importance of

gender-specific mentorship that could transcend culture, especially in light of the culturally specific resistance to change found in parts of Asia versus places such as the United States. Participants agreed that women need particular and concrete kinds of mentorship at specific times. Women need to have a portfolio of mentors so as to draw from individual strengths on certain topics.

Just as valuable is defining what mentorship is not. Mentors are not “band-aid assistance” in which a coach provides a solution for the mentee. Mentors are there to provide the support the mentee needs to confidently arrive at her own conclusions. Mentorship is a more informal relationship with someone whom “you bounce ideas off of.”

Taking a wider perspective, the concept of mentorship itself provides an interesting lens with which to view the role of gender. Men are less willing to acknowledge the number of mentors they have had versus women. For men, the mentor is often someone senior in the organization that eventually becomes a “buddy” rather than an ongoing adviser. For women, that individual remains a mentor for the long term.

Interestingly, although this relationship tends to be a lifelong one for women, only one-third of audience members reported having mentors. Participants supported the idea of women mentoring women to help balance gender inequality, citing the need for more women on corporate boards, where decisions are made. They noted that at the root of gender inequality is the disparity between how men are valued in society (for potential) and how women are valued (for consistency), as well as the often undervalued quality of emotion in effective communication. Organizations (and boards)

should place greater emphasis on emotional intelligence. EQ must be added to IQ. Rather than repress emotion, channel it into effective communication. Analytics are not enough in board politics. Mentorship (and even iterations like the collective mentorship of an online forum or less intimate sponsorship) can help women to close this gap.

Ultimately, the mentee is not the only one who benefits from a mentorship. There is a give-and-take nature of the relationship and mentors also grow as their mentees grow.

## Concluding Session

### Catalyzing Ideas, Taking Action, Effecting Change

**Vishakha N. Desai, Astrid Tuminez and Lin Yi**, Secretary-General at CPAFFC, summarized the overarching themes of the summit and offered next steps to continue the dialogue and bring about change in the wider world.

- In terms of government and public policy, push for a larger commitment to increasing women's representation, more attention and funding given to these issues, greater development and harnessing of human capital, and a definition of a "new normal" for women.
- Women in civic leadership positions can support progress on key issues by bringing a culturally nuanced approach to their roles and work to change the traditional paradigm.
- Do not solely focus on high-profile endeavors, but also identify small projects where women can make a difference.
- Encourage developing economies to do more to enhance women in leadership. Although controversial, affirmative action can deliver results.



**Vishakha N. Desai**, summarizes key takeaways for summit attendees.

- Collectively, women should utilize Western education and other experiences in order to maximize a shared future with the East.
- Communicate with other women to share ideas and maintain the momentum built at the summit.

In a rapidly changing society, traditional attitudes still resonate. Women can balance the duality of their roles professionally and personally, and ultimately "be the change they want to see in the world." A key message was that it is vital that these discussions not stop at the summit.

## About Spencer Stuart

Spencer Stuart is one of the world's leading executive search consulting firms. Privately held since 1956, Spencer Stuart applies its extensive knowledge of industries, functions and talent to advise select clients — ranging from major multinationals to emerging companies to nonprofit organizations — and address their leadership requirements. Through 54 offices in 29 countries and a broad range of practice groups, Spencer Stuart consultants focus on senior-level executive search, board director appointments, succession planning and in-depth senior executive management assessments.

SpencerStuart



Asia  
Society®

Women  
Leadership  
Initiative