**BLC Bank represents Lebanon on the GBA’s Board of Directors**

Founded in 2000, the GBA or the Global Banking Alliance for Women (www.gbafor**women**.org ) is the leading international network of financial institutions and organizations interested in building women's wealth worldwide, with a particular focus on women entrepreneurs running small and medium enterprises.

Always being at the forefront of women leadership initiatives, BLC Bank was welcomed to join GBA in the summer of 2011 as the first bank from the Middle East siding with giant institutions such as the Royal Bank of Scotland Group, Westpac, Standard Chartered and Scotiabank to name a few. On September 11, 2013, Mrs. Tania Moussallem, Assistant General Manager of BLC Bank was elected to become a member of the Alliance’s governing board chaired by Chris Sullivan, Chief Executive of the Corporate Banking Division at the Royal Bank of Scotland Group, and formed by delegates from global institutions the likes of Standard Chartered, Westpac, RBS, dfcu bank Uganda and the IFC.

Being the first elected board member from the MENA region is not just a proud achievement to the Bank itself, but to Lebanon and the region as well. This ground-breaking milestone is a well-earned reward to the hard and perseverant work that led BLC Bank to become the first Bank in the Middle East and North Africa region committed to women's economic empowerment, and the Bank and employer of choice for Lebanese women. It is also an international recognition of the Bank’s rigorous strategy and its successful launching of the WE initiative, a holistic value proposition fully dedicated to women and which has become a renowned platform allowing women to learn, connect and share experiences and expertise with an aim to inspire them and help them develop their businesses and achieve their personal and financial goals.

Such efforts were coupled with BLC Bank’s “deep insight into designing, launching and implementing a Women's Market program, , as well as the unfailing support the Bank has given the GBA over the past year, not to mention its strategic location in a growth region (the Middle East)” as stated by the GBA itself. Furthermore, the Bank played a pivotal role in the 2013 GBA Summit, which was held in Istanbul from September 10 till September 13, by being one of the three chosen banks to hold a study tour to the new joining members. On another note, BLC Bank offered to host a study tour to be held in Lebanon in March 2014, open to all the members of the GBA network who will have the chance to benefit from the Bank’s best practices for developing a program for women’s economic empowerment. BLC Bank was also a major contributor to the recently launched members-only “how-to guide” prepared by GBA dedicated to highlight the “to-do’s and “not-to do’s” when preparing an economic empowerment program for women.

Instigator of the BLC We Initiative program, Mrs. Moussallem, will serve a three-year term. Holding a Masters degree in Finance & Communication from ESSEC (France) and a degree in Business Administration from the American University of Beirut, Mrs. Moussallem joined the Bank in 2008 with over 17 years of banking experience. Commenting on her new board member role, she says: “We are proud to be the only Lebanese institution to become a member of the GBA. We hope this partnership is only the beginning of a path of milestones we will help achieving, for women entrepreneurship in Lebanon and around the world.”

Currently, the GBA network consists of 34 member institutions working in more than 135 countries to build innovative, comprehensive programs that provide female entrepreneurs with vital access to capital, markets, education, and training. Along with building its member banks’ capacity to serve their women customers, GBA uses its collective voice to advocate for greater awareness of women’s vital economic role as consumers, investors, and job-creating entrepreneurs.