

Leading professionals to judge ‘Top50 Professional and Career Women Awards 2021’ by Women in Management and IFC

The highly anticipated annual ‘Top50 Professional and Career Women Awards 2021’, has received an outpouring of applications since it opened for entries in September. The 11th edition of the Awards that champions gender equality and recognizes leading women professionals, has assigned to its judging panel a line-up of formidable forces in the workplace.

Initiated in 2010 by Women in Management (WIM), the ‘Top50 Professional and Career Women Awards’ is now supported by Women in Work –a partnership between the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the government of Australia. The Awards aim to identify and honor the trailblazing achievements of women and women-led organizations in Sri Lanka. With a new bar being set every year, the task of evaluating the strong line up of applicants becomes an increasingly difficult feat.

The event will serve as a forum to recognize women who have distinguished themselves by providing leadership and inspiration for women of diverse backgrounds hoping to make their own impact in their respective fields. Reflective of the caliber of the awards and the challenging responsibility ahead, the judges for this year’s competition make-up an illustrious panel of industry titans and experts – all committed to the role of ensuring that the judging process is free, fair, and truly represents each recipient’s achievements.

The 2021 judging panel will be chaired by Nadija Tambiah, Head of Legal, Secretarial and Corporate Social Responsibility at John Keells Holdings, and includes Jayanthi Dharmasena, Managing Director of Hayleys Agriculture Holdings Ltd; Dr. Kishu Gomes, Group MD/CEO of Dreamron Group of Companies; Nisthar Cassim, Founding Editor and CEO of Daily FT; Dr. Rohantha Athukorala, Country Head of Cloomtrack Labs - Sri Lanka, Maldives & Pakistan; Sandra De Zoysa, Group Chief Customer Officer at Dialog Axiata PLC; Sandya Salgado, Strategic Marketing Professional; Santosh Menon, CEO of KL.LK; Amanda Jewell, Acting Australian High Commissioner for Sri Lanka; and Sarah Twigg, Program Manager for Women in Work at IFC.

“The WIM Top50 Awards programme has been a unique and critical catalyst for the recognition and motivation of female talent in Sri Lanka, and I am honored to be chairing the distinguished judging panel this year,” commented Nadija Tambiah, Head of Legal, Secretarial and CSR at John Keells Holdings PLC and Chair of the 2021 judging panel.

“With every year, the selection process becomes increasingly challenging,” admitted Dr. Rohantha Athukorala Country Head of Clootrack Labs - Sri Lanka, Maldives & Pakistan. *“We are aware that professional astuteness and leadership can be found in the unlikeliest of places, and so, we encourage applicants from all over the country and from every social sphere to nominate candidates they feel fit the bill.”*

Research has proven that the pandemic has had a disproportionate negative effect on women in the workplace as compared with their male counterparts. This year’s ceremony –aptly themed ‘Empowered Women for a Resilient Future’- will be a measure of candidates’ endurance in leadership over career success and trajectory.

“This year we will be looking out for a new benchmark in female leadership and business performance,” said Dr. Kishu Gomes, Group CEO Dreamron Group of Companies on the new standards of the Awards. *“The Top50 winners of 2021 will be those who have been able to successfully weather the turbulence of the new normal and truly take the country forward.”*

“As the Top50 Awards Chair for 2021 and as a past awardee myself, I am honored to have been selected to lead the WIM Top50 Awards Committee,” added Amali Mudunkotuwa Mendis, Top50 Awards Committee Chair. *“I am certain that this year will be unique, as it won’t be just leaders we are selecting, but resilient leaders.”*

While the Awards will shine the limelight on high-achieving Sri Lankan women, its long-term goal has always been to encourage greater efforts by companies and businesses to promote practices, programs and actions to create more gender-inclusive business cultures that embrace gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Nominees across all sectors are encouraged to apply for the career, professional, business, and organizational award categories with a special award given to honor male champions of change and diversity. Nominations are open until 25 October 2021 and can be made by visiting www.womeninmanagementawards.org.