



Press release

French Minister Yamina Benguigui to attend Womankind's evening in support of women and girls' empowerment

Mrs Yamina Benguigui, Minister for Relations with Francophone Countries and former film director has always put women's rights at the heart of her work. She will be attending the Womankind Foundation's 5th biannual fundraising gala on 30th January 2014 at the Espace Hippomène in Geneva, alongside many brilliant artists and first-class guests from around the world.

(Womankind – Carouge/Geneva, Switzerland, January 27, 2014)

More than **1000 selected VIP guests** are announced at the prestigious event, which will benefit of Womankind's worldwide activities for girls and women's empowerment. During the previous fundraising Gala in 2012, the Foundation raised over CHF 1.35 million (net of costs), thanks to the generosity of its sponsors and guests.

"We are as determined as ever to foster progress for underprivileged girls and women. We will put all our skills, experience and resources towards this goal, encouraging innovation and scaling up models that generate systemic social change", says **Yann Borgstedt**, Womankind's chairman and founder. He further pledges: "The entire benefits of the evening will be allocated to cover our program's field expenses, while I commit to covering the administrative costs of running the Foundation."

The Womankind Foundation is leading ground-breaking projects such as **96 NISAA FM**, the first commercial women's radio in the Middle-East, launched in 2010; "**World 100 Men**", a radio fiction series in Arabic promoting women's active role in society and women's rights; **WomenChangeMakers**, a fellowship that aims at supporting the growth of social entrepreneurs working in favour of girls and women in India and Brazil; the development of a new model for girls' public education in **Afghanistan**, that will expand to tens of thousands of pupils in a dozen schools; and **the Womankind Award**, an innovative distinction to be launched in 2014 that will serve to replicate programs which have proven to reduce violence against women.

Safeena Husain, founder and executive director of **Educate Girls** in India, one of the social entrepreneurs supported through Womankind's WomenChangeMakers' fellowship, will address the Gala's audience to illustrate the impressive positive results of investing in girls' education.

A fabulous evening of solidarity

The evening's programme is rich and spectacular. It includes **Ayo**, the acclaimed German-Nigerian singer, with her fusion of soul, jazz and African sounds, who recently released her fourth album "Ticket to the World"; **Licia Chery**, and up-and-coming Swiss singer of Haitian origins; the rapper **Mokobé**; **Micah and the Disco Bandits** with their wild rhythms; and the **Pockemon Crew**, with their stunning hip hop show. The World Champion performers of the Cirque Du Soleil, "**Duo MainTenant**", whose attendance is graciously sponsored by **Bedat & Co.**, will make an appearance, while the famed sculptor **Eleanor Cardozo**, will unveil and auction a sculpture of one of the gymnasts for Womanity. French painter **Michael Raivard** will create a portrait *in situ* for the auction sale, using its exclusive technique called "live gluing". **Mareva Galanter**, former Miss France, singer and actress, and **Simon Kidston**, will be leading the crowd elegantly through the evening. Other surprise guests and shows will entertain the public throughout the night.

To arouse the guests' generosity, **Simon de Pury**, the world-famous Swiss auctioneer, will preside over an auction presenting unique and prestigious items and experiences, such as a **1958 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud** customised with white crocodile leather by **Jean Claude Jitrois**, the celebrated French master of leather design; a chic and unique **FIAT 500**, designed exclusively by **Francesca Versace**; and a **SMART** car custom-designed by the acclaimed painter **Philippe Pasqua**. The three designers will be personally present to raise the enthusiasm of the audience. There will also be some **exceptional art pieces**; **dream vacations** in luxurious get-aways; **money-can't-buy experiences** in Hollywood, Cannes, with FC Barcelona, in world-renown wineries and on a F1 circuit, and many more exceptional items.

On this occasion, **Hublot**, Womanity's faithful partner in the luxury watch industry, will launch an exclusive and limited edition of a watch, the **Hublot "Womanity" watch**, with sales benefitting the Womanity Foundation.

A great number of prestigious sponsors have demonstrated their generous support to the foundation by donating valuable auction and tombola lots, services, in-kind contributions and funds. Namely the **Compagnie des Parcs** and the **Swiss Development Group**; **Air France**, **Brevan Howard**, **Chopard**, **HBK Investments Advisory**, **Hublot**, **Kamel Alzarka**, **The Singapore Freeport**, **UBS**; **Geneva Freeports** and many others.

For Yann Borgstedt "this charity Gala will most certainly be splendid, given the generosity and support of all those involved. I am deeply grateful to everyone who helped us, and promise to making all our supporters proud of what we will undertake in the field thanks to their contributions."

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***The Womanity Foundation** is an independent private foundation established in 2005 and registered in Switzerland, the UK and the USA. It aims to empower girls and women to shape their future and accelerate progress within their communities, with a vision to contribute to their equal and full social, economic and political participation.*

Inspired by the UN Millennium Development Goals, the Womanity Foundation has identified

the following key objectives for its intervention:

- *Support girls' and women's access to quality education and vocational training;*
- *Create employment, revenue generation and professional career opportunities for girls and women;*
- *Promote mechanisms that give women a voice in society, politics and governance institutions;*
- *Protect women and girls' physical and psychological integrity and ensure equitable access to health services.*

In the choice of its programs and projects, it focuses on innovation; potential for growth and replicability; and for systemic change and sustainability.

See www.womanity.org and www.womenchangemakers.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/the.womanity.foundation

Twitter handle: [@forWomanity](https://twitter.com/forWomanity)

Yann Borgstedt's TEDxWomen talk on You Tube: <http://bit.ly/1e65xsQ>

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Photos on the foundation's activities and on the gala are available upon request with the aforementioned contacts.

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