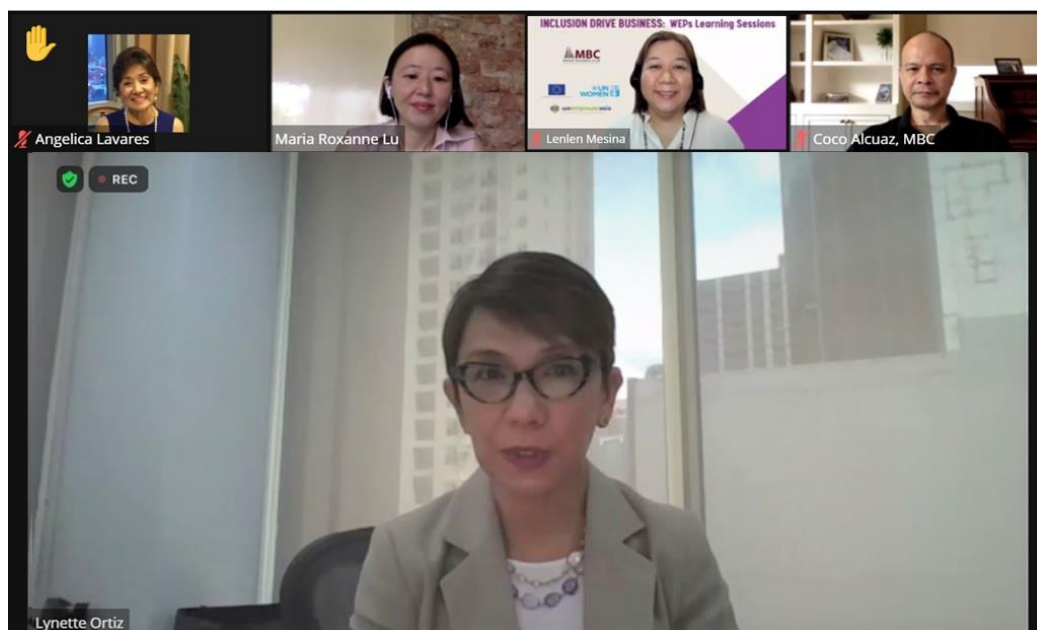



 12 July 2021  
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### **MBC, EU-UN hold Women's Empowerment Principles Learning Sessions**

The Makati Business Club (MBC), in partnership with the EU-UN Women programme WeEmpowerAsia, recently hosted the 3-part series "Inclusion Drives Business: Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Learning Sessions". The series aimed to inform and educate the participants on the different Women's Empowerment Principles and their application in the workplace. CEOs and top executives from different companies, that are recognized awardees of the UN WEPs Awards 2020, were invited to share their WEP-aligned best practices to inspire the attendees to take concrete steps in initiating gender-inclusive programs in their own companies and organizations.

Day 1 of the series was opened by Aileen Jiao, chairperson of the Women in the C-Suite Committee of MBC, followed by a quick overview of the WEPs by Rosalyn Mesina, country Programme Manager of WeEmpowerAsia. Standard Chartered Bank Chief Executive Officer Lynette Ortiz and QBO Innovation Hub Executive Director Katrina Chan talked about how Inclusive Leadership is crucial in supporting women employees and promoting a gender-inclusive workplace. The event was attended by different executives, managers, and key HR Team members from various industries such as academe, mining/power, FMCG, banking and finance, government, and non-profit organizations.

Makati Business Executive Director Club Coco Alcuaz said, "MBC started its Women in the C-Suite advocacy in 2019 because we believe in the title of this series: Inclusion does Drive Business. Women do deserve equal

opportunities, and companies should be inclusive for that reason too. But companies should be inclusive because it is good for innovation, creativity, identifying markets, customer and employee satisfaction, and the bottom line. In a bottom-line driven world, it is contributions like these that make our advocacy sustainable.”

Ortiz talked about Standard Chartered Bank’s advocacy and the progress it has made since it signed a statement of support for the UN Women Empowerment Principles in 2018 including efforts to address gender pay gaps and increase its female representation in senior leadership roles. She shared that SCB’s percentage of women in leadership position has increased to 30% and aims to further increase to 35% by 2025. Fourteen of its markets have female CEOs at the helm, including China, Hong Kong, India, UAE and the Philippines, with herself as its first Filipina CEO since 2016. More than half of its country management team members in the Philippines are women.

Inclusive leadership is critical to encourage participation towards closing the gender gap, but Ortiz also highlighted that promoting gender inclusion and women empowerment is everyone’s responsibility. “Working in an environment that fosters inclusivity and advocates for empowerment is the first step. At the end of the day, every woman should be purposeful and strategic in driving her career. Know your stuff, work hard, and assert yourself. Do not hesitate to speak your mind, render an opinion and make sure that your voice is heard,” she said.

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