

## **Diversity is about more than gender says new think tank**

*“Diversity is about more than gender” says newly formed think tank Diversity UK following the announcement that the EU is to adopt a proposal for quotas to increase the number of women board members in listed companies to 40% by 2020.*

London, UK (PRWEB UK) 23 November 2012 -- Diversity UK, a not-for-profit think tank formed by six individuals with a wide range of public and private sector experience, plans to research, advocate and promote new ideas for improving diversity and inclusion in Britain. The think tank will host a number of member-only roundtables and networking events to engage with individuals from the UK’s largest companies. It hopes to showcase best practice, encourage healthy debate on pertinent issues and influence policy.

“There has been a lot of focus on gender diversity, particularly in corporate boardrooms and in the effort to close the pay gap between men and women, said Lopa Patel MBE, Founder & CEO of Diversity UK, “but diversity is not only about gender. Diversity is about access, fairness and equality for everyone - regardless of what characteristics they have. Ethnicity, age, disability, gender reassignment and sexual orientation are also issues pertinent to making Britain a fairer society. Progress on those has virtually come to a stand still.”

Current research shows that ethnic minorities are unrepresented in the workplace. Although ethnic minorities make up 12% of the working-age population, only 1 in 16 of current FTSE 100 board members is from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. Even in the public arena, only 0.8% of local councillors in England are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic; only 4.1% of MPs are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (as of 2010) and only 6.9% of public appointments are held by BAME individuals. “Clearly there is still some way to go before there is a representative number of ethnic minorities in public appointments, politics or the corporate world commensurate with their numbers in the general population,” added Lopa. “Lack of representation also has an effect on governance. A growing number of studies suggest diverse boards have the potential to improve the financial performance of companies so it is important to remove barriers that may be preventing diverse leaders reaching the very top of the ladder in their sector”.

Diversity UK has organised its first ‘Diverse Leaders’ networking event in London on 12th December 2012 with guest speakers Chris Hyman CBE, the dynamic CEO of FTSE 100 company Serco Plc and Bala Mahendran, CEO of vibrant Basildon Council, to give guests a “glimpse from both sides of the public sector fence”. Since becoming CEO in 2002, Chris Hyman has overseen a period of outstanding growth and performance of the company. Revenue has more than trebled in size to around £5bn, with profits up over 450% to £238m. The last ten years has also seen Serco grow from around 23,000 people to over 110,000 people operating in 40 countries across the globe. Similarly, Basildon’s 170,000 residents, 5,000 registered businesses, and 70,000 workers having seen over £200 million private sector investment in their research and development sector under the guidance of their CEO, Bala Mahendran.

The ‘Diverse Leaders’ event is free to Diversity UK members - membership costs £25 per annum and offers a range of benefits.

Notes for Editors:

About Diversity UK

Diversity UK is a think tank to research, advocate and promote new ideas for improving diversity and inclusion in Britain. It is a not-for-profit, collaborative organisation that works with a wide range of partners, bodies and key opinion formers to engage in a healthy debate about issues of age, race, gender, sexual orientation and disability discrimination. Diversity UK is an evidence-based initiative that seeks to influence policy, enhance civic engagement and improve the perception of the minority ethnic community in Britain.



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