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***For Immediate Release***

**THE BIG 5 TO SUPPORT THE WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES IN 2019**

* ***On November 27, the second edition of The Big 5’s Women in Construction Forum & Awards will host an official Certificate Ceremony for the companies willing to sign the WEPs.***
* ***Brian Johnson, Managing Partner at Godwin Austen Johnson, and Hind Al Owais, Vice President- International Participants at Expo 2020, are among the industry leaders speaking at this year’s event****.*

**Dubai, 6 November:** Following the successful launch in 2018, The Big 5, the Middle East’s largest construction event, announces the return of the Women in Construction (WIC) Forum & Awards at its upcoming edition (25-28 November, Dubai World Trade Centre). A powerful initiative focused on Gender Balance, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), and Women in Leadership, the prestigious WIC Forum & Awards runs on November 27.

This year, the event also supports the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs), an initiative of the UN Women and the UN Global Compact, providing seven principles that organisations in all fields can commit to adopt in order to advocate gender balance in the workplace, community, and marketplace.

Companies willing to come together and sign the WEPs can do so at the official Certificate Ceremony hosted by The Big 5’s Women in Construction Forum & Awards.

Hanane Arif, Head of Communication, Societe Generale Middle East and Chairwomen of WEPs Local Network UAE, says: “Despite the unconscious gender bias barriers, women continue to build their path in the industry. Corporates have a critical role to play and the WEPs is the tool that will help them to act and guide them in their journey for greater gender equality.

“We are proud to have dmg events, the organisers of The Big 5, part of the WEPs community, and we hope that The Big 5 Women in Construction Forum & Awards will bring together the industry to join the WEPs and the global movement.”

According to a research published by the WEPs UAE Local Network, eliminating discrimination against female workers can increase productivity by up to 40%. “Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) policies in organizations boost business,” says Josine Heijmans, Portfolio Director at dmg events.

“With this is mind, we are proud to bring back the Women in Construction Forum & Awards to share inspiring stories of women in construction and leadership positions, promote D&I policies that increase productivity in construction businesses, and support the WEP’s initiative,” Heijmans adds.

Morgan Tuckness, Head of Technical Services, Global Director, Drees & Sommer, and a speaker at The Big 5’s WIC Forum, says: “There has been a big mental shift in the industry over the past few years and the inclusion of woman professionals has become more important and relevant. However, the policies that would enable them to perform and succeed are lacking.

“Taking part in the Women in Construction Forum & Awards will be an opportunity to open the discussion further about what the industry needs and how to get there.”

The lineup of speakers at the WIC Forum also includes leading industry names of the likes of Brian Johnson, Managing Partner at Godwin Austen Johnson, Hind Al Owais, Vice President- International Participants at Expo 2020, and Katie Fifer, Vice President- Finance, Asia & Middle East at Katerra, among many others.

Following the keynote presentations and panel discussions, The Big 5 will award industry professionals and organisations in the construction sector in the following categories: “Woman in Leadership”, “Next-Gen Woman”, and “Company Championing Inclusion & Diversity”.

The WEPs Pledge Ceremony and a networking session will close the second edition of Women in Construction Forum & Awards.

On the sidelines of the event, a growing movement of women and men is joining the Ambassadors Program of The Big 5’s Women in Construction, with the aim of fostering meaningful discussions and promoting gender balance in the traditionally male dominated construction sector.

To know more about The Big 5’s Women in Construction: [www.thebig5.ae/education-features/women-in-construction](https://www.thebig5.ae/education-features/women-in-construction)

Register online to attend for free The Big 5 and the WIC Forum & Awards, clicking [HERE](http://www.thebig5.ae?utm_source=Website&utm_medium=Newsroom&utm_campaign=WIC_PressRelease&utm_content=&utm_term=).

**How to sign the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs)**

WEPs, an initiative of the UN Women, the global champion for gender equality, and the UN Global Compact, the largest sustainability network in the world, provides seven principles that organizations in all fields can commit to adopt in order to advocate gender balance in the workplace, community and marketplace.

On 27th November 2019, The Big 5 will host an official Certificate Ceremony for the companies who are willing to come together and sign the WEPs.

Interested companies shall get in touch with The Big 5 at womeninconstruction@thebig5.ae, and express their in-principle interest by November 10.

Details about the WEPs and its principles can also be found here: <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/weps/about>.

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**About The Big 5 – The Global Hub for the Construction Industry**

25 - 28 November 2019, Dubai World Trade Centre

The Big 5 is the region’s largest and most influential event for the construction industry. Since 1979, the event has launched hundreds of thousands of products boosting the expansion of the Middle East and African markets. It has facilitated partnerships, advanced knowledge and industry best practices, while serving as the gateway for international companies to access the region.

Celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, the event is set to support construction companies through a shifting economic landscape, boost business, launch the latest building solutions, educate industry professionals, and foster best practices championing technological innovation.

For the first time, The Big 5 covers the full construction cycle. Not only does it showcase products across six dedicated product sectors, it also runs alongside six specialised events enabling industry professionals to source products from around the globe for every stage of the construction projects: The Big 5 Heavy, Middle East Concrete, HVAC R Expo, Middle East Stone, The Big 5 Solar, and the Urban Design & Landscape Expo.

Beyond bringing to Dubai over 20,000 innovative building solutions to over 68,000 expected visitors, the seven co-located events provide more than 220 complimentary high-level summits, practical seminars, and CPD-certified workshops to foster collaboration, support best practices, and provide effective solutions to today’s industry challenges.

In order to promote technological innovation in the construction sector, the event also features The Big 5’s Start-Up City, the Live Innovation Zone, and the FutureTech Construction Summit, among others.

To know more, visit [www.thebig5.ae](http://www.thebig5.ae)