

EVENT REPORT

WIL Annual Gathering in London



13 March 2024
The Palace of Westminster



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Event Snapshot



On 13 March 2024, the European Network for Women in Leadership (WIL Europe), in collaboration with event partner **Kering**, presented its Annual Gathering at the prestigious Palace of Westminster in London. Hosted by **The Lord of Erroll** in collaboration with **Savvitas**, the event was situated within the regal confines of the Cholmondeley Room and Terrace, offering attendees beautiful views over the Thames and London skyline.

The day commenced with a dedicated session for the participants of the 9th edition of WIL's Women Talent Pool Leadership Programme. This session included a dialogue with WTP9 Patron **Marie-Claire Daveu**, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer at Kering and WIL Member. The engaging conversation established the theme for the day, concentrating on the influence of responsible practices in defining the future of leadership.

Following this, the broader assembly was greeted with welcome remarks. **The Lord of Erroll**, Member of the UK House of Lords, opened the session, introduced by **Helene Martin Gee**, President at Savvitas. This was succeeded by WIL President **Thaima Samman**, Founder & Partner at SAMMAN Law and Corporate Affairs, and WIL Board Member **Marie-Claire Daveu**, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer at Kering.



Left to right: the Lord of Erroll and Helene Martin Gee

The morning session featured a keynote by **Rebecca Pow MP**, UK Minister for Nature, and introductions by Dame **Menna Rawlings** and Madame **Hélène Duchêne**, respective British and French Ambassadors.

A panel debate on "Embracing Biodiversity for a Sustainable Future" ensued, moderated by **Caroline Bush**, Associate Director at Osborne Clarke. The panel included esteemed speakers such as **Marie-Claire Daveu**, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer at Kering; **Florika Fink-Hooijer**, Director-General for Environment at the European Commission; **Naomi Kingston**, VP Europe at the Conservation International; and **Caroline Rush**, CEO at the British Fashion Council. The agenda advanced with a fireside chat moderated by **Dana Thomas**, Journalist, Author & Podcaster, featuring **Professor Dilys Williams**, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion, along with **Marie-Claire Daveu**, of Kering, **Kaja Grujic**, Fashion Values x GFA Next Gen Assembly Member and a discussion with **Sir Partha Dasgupta**, Frank Ramsey Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Cambridge, moderated by **Inga Karten**, Political Consultant & WIL Board Member. The following panel addressed "Harnessing Innovation to Protect Our Planet," moderated by **Nour Mejri**, Chief Strategy Officer at Rexel, with panellists including **Helen Brocklebank**, CEO at Walpole, **Kristina Murrin**, CEO at The King's Foundation, and **Antoine Rostand**, Founder and President at Kayros.



WIL Europe President Thaima Samman

The event concluded with a keynote by **Lindsay Hooper**, CEO at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. A conversation on Green Infrastructure, steered by **Sarah de Carvalho MBE**, CEO at It's a Penalty. Contributions from **Shirley Rodrigues** and **Antonia Höög**, Chief Sustainable Officer at Keolis, highlighted the commitment to ecological preservation.

The gathering culminated in a networking cocktail at **The Royal Horseguards Hotel**. This distinguished event transitioned to a phase of networking and mingling, set against the backdrop of a historical venue, inviting attendees to connect and engage in a setting rich with heritage.

Exchange with WTP9 Patron Marie-Claire Daveu



The WIL Annual Gathering in London commenced with an engaging session dedicated to the up-and-coming female leaders from the 9th edition of the Women Talent Pool Leadership Programme. In this special segment, WTP9 talents had the privilege to meet and converse with the esteemed WTP9 Patron, Marie-Claire Daveu, who shared her valuable insights and experience, offering the participants a unique opportunity to gain guidance on their path to leadership.

Welcome remarks



Merlin Hay
24th Earl of Erroll



Helene Martin Gee

The session was inaugurated by the distinguished Lord of Erroll, Member of the UK House of Lords, with an introduction by Helene Martin Gee, President at Savvitas. His speech captured the essence of the day's agenda, which centred on leadership, sustainability, and collaborative endeavour.



Thaima Samman



Marie-Claire Daveu

WIL President Thaima Samman and WIL Member Marie-Claire Daveu, representing our event partner Kering, initiated the primary segment of the day, gathering over 150 WIL Members, Talents, Fellows, and attendees. This moment provided an opportunity to greet the participants.

Keynote by UK Minister for Nature



In a stirring keynote, Rebecca Pow MP, UK Minister for Nature, part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, imparted to our guests profound insights into the crucial dependency of the world's economy on nature, stating, “*More than half of the world's economy is highly or moderately dependent on nature and this is why it's important we set up a framework to restore it.*” She stressed the urgency of uniting farmers and landowners to augment biodiversity, casting light on the substantial role of cross-sector collaboration in ecological restoration.

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Introductory Words by Ambassadors



One of the noteworthy aspects of this session was the presence of two women Ambassadors, representing two pivotal nations in Europe, emphasising the vital roles women assume in steering discussions on crucial subjects. Following this inspiring premise, the session moved forward with insightful opening words from Dame Menna Rawlings, British Ambassador to France (left photo), as she unveiled the Embassy's forthcoming endeavours to bolster trade, investment, and cultural relations in the coming year. Her revelations highlighted the importance of sustained and strategic international engagement.

This was seamlessly followed by Madame Hélène Duchêne, French Ambassador to the United Kingdom (right photo). She captivated attendees by recounting her journey as a female leader, underlining the empowering message that women's leadership is pivotal in shaping diplomatic and global environmental policies.

Panel Debate: Embracing Biodiversity for a Sustainable Future



The first debate of the day, moderated by Caroline Bush of Osborne Clarke, centred on the imperative of embracing biodiversity to forge a sustainable future. Insightful contributions came from Marie-Claire Daveu of Kering, Florika Fink-Hooijer from the EU Commission, Naomi Kingston of Conservation International, and Caroline Rush of the British Fashion Council, each outlining their organisation's contributions to this vital goal. The dialogue highlighted the convergence of ecological diversity with industry practices and policy-making, providing participants with a richer understanding and actionable strategies to integrate into their spheres of influence.

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Wrap-up

Yvonne Mitschka

Investment Manager at DEG - German Development Finance Institution & Participant of WIL's Women Talent Pool leadership programme



Left to right: Florika Fink-Hooijer, Marie-Claire Daveu, Naomi Kingston, Caroline Rush

Fireside Chat with the Centre for Sustainable Fashion



Before the networking lunch, Dana Thomas, renowned journalist, author, and podcaster, led a panel of esteemed figures from the world of fashion sustainability. Marie-Claire Daveu from Kering Group, Professor Dilys Williams, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF) at the London College of Fashion, and Kaja Grujic from the Fashion Values x GFA Next Gen Assembly, delved into how sustainable practices can be passed on to future generations in the fashion industry.

In addition to highlighting the 10 years of collaboration between Kering and the CSF, the conversation touched on the importance of education in advancing sustainability in fashion, how businesses are integrating eco-friendly strategies into their operations, and storytelling to promote environmental awareness. The session offered a thorough exploration of how fashion, sustainability, and leadership intersect, providing clear insights into their collective impact to foster a greener future.

Conversation with Sir Partha Dasgupta on the Economics of Biodiversity



After lunch, in a compelling intervention, moderated by Inga Karten, Senior Special Advisor at Miller & Meier Consulting and WIL Board Member, Sir Partha Dasgupta of Cambridge University delivered a TED-talk style presentation, masterfully underscoring the significance of biodiversity within economic growth models. The acclaimed Economist and Emeritus Professor illuminated the intricate ways that ecological diversity underpins the foundations of economic systems and prosperity. The audience was engaged by Sir Partha's profound insights, bridging the gap between ecological health and economic development, and underscoring the value of integrating biodiversity into the heart of economic planning.

Panel Debate: Harnessing Innovation to Protect Our Planet



Following the first engaging session, a subsequent debate was adeptly moderated by **Nour Mejri**, Chief Strategy Officer at Rexel. This enlightening discussion offered attendees a variety of viewpoints on how different sectors are adopting innovative strategies to enhance environmental sustainability. The panel included **Helen Brocklebank**, CEO at Walpole, **Kristina Murrin**, CEO at The King's Foundation, and **Antoine Rostand**, Founder and President at Kayrros. Each leader provided valuable insights from their unique sectors, emphasizing the critical importance of innovation in propelling the shift towards a more sustainable economy and future.

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Wrap-up

Olivia Moisan

Legal Manager at Capgemini &
Participant of WIL's Women Talent
Pool leadership programme



Left to right: Helen Brocklebank, Antoine Rostand, Kristina Murrin, Nour Mejri

Networking and speed-networking



The day progressed with an exclusive speed-networking session for WTP8 and WTP9 Talents, allowing them to engage directly with WIL Members. Parallel to this, a networking coffee break buzzed with lively discussions among other participants, fostering a collaborative atmosphere.

Keynote by Lindsay Hooper



In her compelling keynote, Lindsay Hooper, CEO at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, highlighted the need for a purposeful approach to leadership - one that embeds nature into commercial, economic and policy decision-making, addressing the root causes of the challenges we now face. She discussed the importance of leadership that focuses on place, politics and people, which has the moral courage to step into difficult areas, and how we must enable and empower action by everyone across society, rather than simply relying on 'heroic leaders' to solve crises for us.

Conversation on the Green Infrastructure



Sarah de Carvalho MBE, CEO at It's a Penalty and WIL Member, moderated a discussion featuring Shirley Rodrigues and Antonia Höög, Chief Sustainability Officer at Keolis. The debate explored how London is pioneering in making the city resilient to biodiversity loss, with Shirley Rodrigues sharing initiatives for nature recovery and greening projects. Antonia Höög discussed Keolis' approach to aligning corporate social responsibility and environmental performance with broader sustainability goals, particularly in public transport solutions. This session provided attendees with valuable insights into the collaborative efforts required to enhance urban green infrastructure and contribute to sustainability targets.

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Networking Cocktail



The event's conclusion was marked by a networking cocktail in the storied River Room at The Royal Horseguards Hotel. This provided the perfect setting for participants to exchange ideas, foster new relationships, and unwind after a day full of engaging conversations and networking opportunities.

Networking breaks



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Networking Coffee



Networking Lunch



Closing Networking Cocktail

More Event Photos



