

The Empire Club Presents



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PANEL: WOMEN WHO LEAD WITH JAKE STIKA

FROM: NEXT-GENERATION MEN

Welcome Address, by Mr. Kent Emerson, Associate Vice President at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and President of the Empire Club of Canada

March 5, 2019

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. From the Omni King Edward Hotel in downtown Toronto, welcome, to the meeting. For those of you just joining us through either our webcast or our podcast, welcome, to the meeting. Today we present “The International Women’s Day Panel: Women Who Lead.” I am very proud to celebrate this occasion with all of you.

HEAD TABLE

Distinguished Guest Speakers:

Ms. Jessica Johnson, Executive Editor and Creative Director, The Walrus
The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion,
Government of Canada

Ms. Farah Qasemi, Vice President, Business Development Banking and Capital
Markets, KPMG Canada

Ms. Vicki Saunders, Founder, SheEO

Mr. Jake Stika, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Next Gen Men

Guests:

Ms. Megan Boyle, Director Public Affairs, Red Bull Canada; Director,
Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Emily Emerson, Manager, Financial Services Policy Division,
Ontario Ministry of Finance

Mr. Chandran Fernando, Managing Partner, Matrix360

Ms. Jenna Hay, Head of Policy Development and Regulatory Affairs,
Lending Loop; Director, Empire Club of Canada

International Women’s Day, coming up on March 8th,
is very important to me and to the Empire Club, so much

so, that we have dedicated ourselves to holding this event annually. In the spirit of the occasion, I am going to call Jenna Hay, one of our directors, up here in just a minute to give some contextual remarks.

Before I do this, I would like to do a couple of things. First, I would like to thank Megan Boyle for organizing this event, for being the lead on it.

The second thing is I want to talk about a changemaker. The Empire Club, having a vintage as long as we have, has required changemakers here. We have a Past President who was the first woman president in 1984. Madam Past President, thank you for coming today. I would like everyone to congratulate Catherine Charlton. I know she is here somewhere. I am looking for her. We want to say thank you—first woman president of the Empire Club of Canada!

Lastly, I wanted to pay some respect to this Baroness von Sketch Show, a little CBC show that you guys might know. They take a critical approach and a hilarious view of some workplace issues. This is a little sketch of job promotion.

I am going to ask you to take a look at this. It is hilarious. Roll them.

[VIDEO.] Promotion Skit from CBC's Baroness Von Sketch, (Season 3, Episode 5, Because I Care)

That video speaks for itself. I would like to invite Jenna Hay up here to say a bit more. Thank you.

Introduction, by Ms. Jenna Hay, Head of Policy Development and Regulatory Affairs, Lending Loop; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Baroness von Sketch is a bit of a tough act to follow.

Thank you, Kent, and thank you all for being here, today. For this event, we carefully selected a panel of women who are leaders in a variety of ways. Women who have not just achieved success in their respective fields, but who have brought and continue to bring important issues to light and who work to create positive change. We are gathered to not only celebrate International Women's Day, but also to continue meaningful conversations about women's advancement, be it social, corporate, economic in nature.

These conversations matter greatly. For one, they help us identify what works or what does not. Perhaps, most importantly, they help us better understand what is missing or what has yet to be done as we work towards gender equality.

One of the best tools we have at our disposal is data. When we look at the data behind women's economic advancement, things may seem a bit grim. Take, for example, women's representation on corporate boards.

The recently released 2018 Spencer Stuart Board Index identified that 30% of all non-executive director appointments were women, a 10% decline from 2017 where it was: 40%. Last September, the Canadian Securities Adminis-

trators released their fourth report on women on boards in an executive position. The total percentage of board seats occupied by women was 15%. Four years before, it was 11%.

Actually, I should note, just for a moment, that I am very pleased to serve on the board of the Empire Club that has 40% representation by women, and strong leadership at the helm is identified by Catherine Charlton our past president.

Back to the numbers. They are trending upward but at a glacial pace. If these stats do not do it for you, we can replay that clip again.

The numbers found in these reports are important, because they hold a mirror up to our attitudes and to our decision-making. They also help hold individuals and groups accountable for that decision-making.

At their core, they raise an increasingly salient and, at times, difficult question: Does what we do work?

Should we do things differently? When we discuss women's corporate or economic advancement, we often talk about the need to get more women into certain systems, often ones that have traditionally been unwelcoming.

We talk about the need to get more women into STEM or more women on boards.

These are important conversations to have, but if we do not approach the how of it with a critical lens, we may miss the opportunity to effectively create structures and systems that are truly more inclusive of women.

I will use a personal example. I work in fintech and much

of the policy work that I undertake focuses on better understanding the challenges faced by women business owners who are accessing capital. Throughout our examination of the issue, we have returned to the question time and time again of whether or not we need to change the way that women access capital, providing them with a different kind of system that works for them rather than just relying on traditional methods. I, like many others, continually face the challenge of figuring out a real solution to this real problem.

When we examine the issues that women encounter, we must remember that long-established systems and structures often disadvantage women. Negative views of women are imbedded in our culture and are the status quo of many of our workplaces. This is why we must tackle these issues with ingenuity, creativity and resilience. It is no easy feat, but taking this approach can yield great, lasting results.

Thankfully, for all of us, we have four panelists who are ready to engage us in meaningful and critical conversation about how we achieve those results.

As our panelists share their opinions on the advancement of women's equality, I look forward to being challenged on the way I think about and approach the issues women face. Judging by this jam-packed room, I would venture to guess that all of you do, too. Thank you very much.

Introduction to Panelists, by Kent Emerson

Let us get started. We are going to get started with the moderator today, who is a passionate speaker and facilitator focused on gender-based issues related to the social and emotional development of boys, the health and wellbeing of men as well as diversity and inclusion. His work at Next Gen Men, a nonprofit promoting positive masculinities, healthy relationships and gender equity in schools, communities, and workplaces has impacted the lives of men and boys and those they touch across Canada.

Recently named one of Avenue Magazine's "Top 40 Under 40," as well as having earned recognition from Ashoka, the British Council and the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, Jake has also spoken at the United Nations as part of the Canadian delegation and participated in the UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Leaders' Forum. Please, welcome to the stage the Executive Director and Co-founder of Next Gen Men, Jake Stika.

A frequent writer on women's issues, she has contributed to a number of publications across North America, including *The Walrus*, *The New Republic*, *Lucky*, *Toronto Life*, *Reader's Digest* and *enRoute*. She has also held senior level editing positions at *The Globe and Mail*, *Saturday Night*, *Azure* and *Fashion Quarterly*. From 2009 to 2015 she was the head copywriter behind the successful transformation of Hudson's Bay, Canada's iconic department store. Jessica is an alumnus of the University of British Columbia's Cre-

ative Writing program. Please, welcome the Executive Editor and Creative Director of *The Walrus*, Jessica Johnson.

Our next guest was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Markham—Thornhill in April 2017 and was appointed Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion in July 2018. Throughout her 20 years of public service, Minister Ng has been a passionate community leader and advocate with a proven track record of results in the areas of education, women’s leadership, job creation, and entrepreneurship.

Prior to serving as a Member of Parliament, she has worked as Director of Appointments in the Prime Minister’s Office. She also served as the Director of Policy in provincial education where she built relationships, negotiated with teachers’ unions, and served students while helping to improve Ontario’s education system. Minister Ng also served in the president’s office at Ryerson University, helping to shape new initiatives that connected students and their innovative ideas with businesses and creating quality jobs for young Canadians. She has been a speaker and panelist on topics ranging from business, innovation, women in leadership and Canada-China relations. Please, welcome the MPP for Markham—Thornhill and Canada’s Minister of Small Business, the Honourable Mary Ng. Our next guest is the senior executive in charge of ensuring significant growth in KPMG’s practice by bringing the best of KPMG’s people, intellectual capital, alliances and assets from around the world to Canada’s largest banks. She has focused strictly

on the financial services sector for over a decade and has established a niche in developing greenfield big-bank targets (primarily, Global Systemically Important Banks, or G-SIBs) for the world's leading technology and professional services firms. Before KPMG Canada in 2015, she held leadership roles at CSC UK, PwC UK and PwC Canada. She sat on the United Way of Toronto's Campaign Cabinet and GenNext for two years prior to leaving Toronto in 2012 and is very passionate about women empowerment and leadership, having spoken at length on this topic at industry events on Bay Street and beyond. She is a proud member of the Ascend Canada board of directors. Please, welcome the Vice President of Business Development for KPMG Canada's Banking & Capital Markets practice, Farah Qasemi. Our final guest is the Founder of #radical generosity and SheEO, a network-based, ecosystem approach to selecting, funding, supporting and scaling women-led ventures, building new models, new mindsets and new solutions for a better world. Vicki has co-founded and run ventures in Europe, Toronto and Silicon Valley and has taken a company public on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Vicki was recently named one of the 100 most influential leaders of 2015 from "EBW—Empowering a Billion Women." In 2001, Vicki was selected as a Global Leader for Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum. Please, welcome entrepreneur, award-winning mentor, advisor to the next generation of changemakers, Vicki Saunders.

Women Who Lead Panel with Moderator Mr. Jake Stika

JS: Awesome. Welcome.

We have a tough task ahead of us. We have to squeeze in a lot of really great conversation in 30 minutes.

We are going to try to do that. I am really honoured to be part of this panel because oftentimes people ask me what is something that men can do, as an action, to further women and advance gender equality. I say we should go on a listening tour. We should ask 10, 20, however many women in our lives that we care about what their experiences are in the workplace, their experiences with street harassment, and we will quickly come to find that the threads are the same throughout the stories, and we will build empathy from that. Hopefully, we can hear some of your stories today. Low-ball: What does International Women's Day mean to you? We will start at the far end with Vicki.

VS: I have a love and yet deep dislike of this day and this week. On the one hand, it is amazing that organizations like yourself, the media, most corporations do a lot of work this week finding women, putting them on stage, putting them on the news, writing about them in the media. That is awesome.

Also, it just shines a light on the rest of the year

when that is not a priority, and you can just see how imbalanced we are. Yes, to modeling the behaviour and boo to the fact that it is not much more scaled out.

FQ: International Women's Day is very, very personal, to me. As an ambitious woman, as someone who works in an industry that can be traditionally male dominated, as a mom, as a self-made immigrant, as someone who does not work regular hours, as someone who is literally the only woman sometimes in meetings that I attend and who is younger by a decade, to this day, I still work extra hard to get taken seriously. That is not uncommon, according to the World Economic Forum.

Regardless of what we do, today, it is going to take us about 100 years to close the gender pay gap. This is a real and tangible issue. To Vicki's point, regardless of forums like this, I can see despite that, there is a lot of work that still needs to be done. I am quite passionate about this week. I wish every week was IWD week. At firms like mine, for example, KPMG, in accounting, when it comes to university intakes, we take in more than 50% women. In our industry, accounting as a whole, something happens between graduation and partnership where that percentage just nosedives. We are one of the industry leaders, and we are currently at 28% female partners. When I look at the world I live in, there is so much work that we still have to do. I am a very, very big promoter of it.

JS: Oftentimes, we focus a bit too much on the “pipeline” issue, but we do not really look at the retention piece. I partnered with a woman in Vancouver who works in coaching women in male-dominated industries. She has a brilliant graph that shows general attrition rates, and it is something like 10%–15%.

Then, she works in the STEM field, and it is something like 60%. She says woman in STEM are not having six times more babies, so what is the issue there? We have to look at the culture piece.

MN: Following a little bit of what both Farah and Vicki said, I love this week. I hope it does not take 100 years to close the pay gap. We make 88¢ to the dollar right now, women to men. We have put legislation forth that actually will close that. Let us hope that it is not 100 years. I would say, just to add to another statistic, a week like this gives me the opportunity to talk about it, but it also gives me an opportunity to talk about all the things that we are doing to try to solve it. I have a mandate to double the number of women entrepreneurs by 2025. Here is the number. It is 16% today that there are women-led or women-owned entrepreneurs in Canada. Ninety-nine percent of our businesses in this country are small- and medium-sized businesses, and it is only 16%. It should not take 100 years to close that gap. I am going to double the number of female entrepreneurs by 2025.

JJ: I might speak for a lot of people in the room when I say growing up, I imagined equality is being a state where my gender was no longer an issue. I wanted the same opportunities as men, the same jobs. I always thought I would make the same amount as men. It was quite a shock to discover that I would not. Now, I am in my forties. It is a bit of a surprise to be still actually fighting it more than ever. I have realized that the role for someone like me is to be an advocate for other women, for other minorities. I think this day, a bit of a hallmark holiday, is actually extremely important in just making these issues apparent.

JS: Yes, a level of visibility, for sure. Moving away from the day, the week itself, what, as individuals are you most proud of to get to where you are sitting today and moving forward, as well? Maybe we will go back the other direction, now.

JJ: At The Walrus, we have talked a lot about inclusion, and we see gender not in isolation of race and ability and all kinds of other things. When I first started, women were a minority at The Walrus. It was really hard to get stories by and about women through the magazine. That was just the culture. No one was really standing in my way saying you could not, but it had always been a boys' club. I formed a secret group of women on a team. This was important. There were only two or three of us at the beginning. We worked on

stories and ideas so that we would learn how to present them in a way that men accepted them. I would often leave the gender of the subject out until the very end of a pitch. Then, I would actually use methods much like that lady in the Baroness von Sketch Show adding stuff—you know just trying to speak the language of the other side.

JS: I would like to nominate someone who did this, this, this. We are nodding and then, yes, absolutely.

JJ: Won a Nobel.

MN: I think representation matters. When I ran for office—I would say that today, I have a better sense of why representation matters so much. I will share with you a little story. On the weekend I was with about 100 young people, high school students. They gave me a question. The question was What advice would you give to your 15-year-old self? I really had to think long and hard about what my answer was going to be.

My answer to them was I need you to love more, to be compassionate more, and I need you to fight for what you believe in because you are going to have to have a fight. My 15-year-old self did not have the challenges that they have today. They have climate change facing them. I asked the question How many of you think it is important? Imagine every single one of you put your hands up, because that is what happened in that

room. Imagine that when they go on to social media, the dialogue that is happening there, today, causes a lot of confusion about what they need to do to take their place, their ownership. In that room, it was three quarters women. That room of high school students were young people learning how to create pitches so that they can get the skills they need to create the enterprise that they want to be a part of, the society they want to create. Representation, I am learning week by week, year by year, representation absolutely matters.

Look at the panel that you have here of the women. Thank you for your work because I am part of a team and a cabinet that is made up of 50% women and 50% men. The dialogue and the conversations and the decision-making that takes place at that table is so much more robust and enriching for our country because we have the 50/50. Representation really matters.

JS: Absolutely. We all have a role to play on International Women's Day.

FQ: I struggled with this question quite a bit when I was thinking about it this morning. It just tells you how statistically women just do not toot their own horns.

Looking back with a caveat, it is really because of the big village around me, but what I—and I know billions of people before me have done it—am most proud of, and I really still get goosebumps over it, is

the fact that the most successful, most accomplished years of my career have been the two years when I was pregnant and I was a new mother. I am so thankful to my colleagues, my clients and people I work with and my family, my friends and my village that they supported me. I still have vivid memories of one hand nursing and the other hand negotiating an eight-figure deal on my laptop while on the phone at my kitchen counter at 10:00 p.m. on a Tuesday night. I think we women are capable of crazy things. I just wish we would just celebrate ourselves and each other a bit more.

JS: Mothers are superhumans. I think when we are flipping through résumés, mothers should definitely be on there, and that is an asset, not a liability.

VS: What I am most proud of is that part of SheEO which is focused on diversity. It is really, really important to me. Four percent of capital goes to women entrepreneurs and 0.1%, if you are a woman of colour, which is insane. Forty percent of the founders that we have funded, so far with SheEO, are women of colour.

I want that number to be higher. It is extremely important. The racial diversity piece is a huge part of it. Yes, absolutely. Also, diversity of age and of stage. We have activators in our network who are women who contribute \$1,100. How many activators are here, by the way? Yay, thank you to all of you.

Activators range in age, at the moment, from 14 to 94. We have mothers, daughters and grandmothers in funding the kinds of companies that create a better world. I am with you on the doubling the numbers.

Let us do that. Also, regional diversity. We are coast to coast, so there is a real focus on the fact that you cannot build a new world with just the same people who built this one.

If you want to get to a better place, you need to have everyone at the table and to really create a big tent. Part of the challenge with that when you have a very, very diverse group is there is just a lot of different perspectives. It is way easier to go build a niche kind of thing, but then you get the same kind of world we have got. How do you get all those voices together and create space for everyone to share their diverse perspectives? That is something that is really important to me.

JS: I believe there is a proverb, and it is, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.”

The going alone is when you have a bunch of yes-people, and they are just agreeing because there is a lack of diversity. When we get those people who are challenging us, who are putting our ideas through the ringier, the end product is always better. Now, looking forward, we have marked the day; we have marked

what we are proud of. What is a lesson that we can leave this room with that we need to focus on, something tangible, moving forward? I feel weird because we went this way and then that way. We will go with Farah this time. We will mix it up.

FQ: I will talk about two things. Number one—and this is so important—is to ask for sponsors not mentors.

Mentors are important; they coach you, and they nudge you, but they stay in the background, whereas sponsors are the ones who become your public cheerleaders, and they make it their life mission to get you promoted. That is why the old boys' clubs work, and we do not have those. I am a very, very big believer of that. Secondly—and there is a lot of research behind it, I know, as I was looking at some of the research we at KPMG have done in this area—take risks.

My husband and I—he is sitting there—moved across the Atlantic not once, but twice, for a complete unknown. I am the exception. I am not the norm.

I was looking at some stats according to some work we did in this field. There are actually fewer than four in ten women are open to taking big risks that maybe associated with career advancement. This is where it gets interesting. Their inclination to take risk actually declines as they get more experienced and more confident. If any of you have been mansplained to, you would know that problem does not exist in men.

It is actually a woman thing. If I could leave you with two lessons, those are the two things that have really worked for me.

I am constantly telling myself to do that. It does not come naturally, but we have to.

JS: If I could just piggyback maybe a little bit on this sponsorship piece, I doubt there are any men in this room that would avoid being alone with a woman, but that is something that is coming up right now. My challenge to those individuals—and if you are in a room and you can challenge those individuals—is why would you feel that way? Do you not trust yourself? If you do not trust yourself, you have to ask what kind of society and culture we are living in that we do not trust men left alone with women. That would be my piggyback to the sponsorship piece. What about yourself, Jessica?

JJ: One thing that we are doing in media is looking at expertise and the notion of who gets to be an expert.

I have two editors on our team that have electively decided from now on that half the experts in a story have to be female. It is really radical when you look at who the doctors, lawyers, scientists are that are being quoted on record as being experts. In the case of science, it is extremely interesting because that in turn, will affect their funding, their tenure, all of these other

kinds of things. To me, that is a no-brainer. Obviously, we do not have a problem with that on this panel, but, now, especially if I am asked to speak, I try to make sure there is a good gender/race representation in the crowd. Who people see is who they believe. Until we can change that, we will probably be on the sidelines.

VS: I think I am just going to ask a question. How many people in this room would help someone if they asked them right now? Okay, cool. How many people like asking for help? Right, so this is a really deep insight.

I think we have created environments where it is not that safe to ask for help, and in particular, women.

We are in a lot of unsafe environments, so saying you do not know how to do something is not safe in a lot of places. This is something we focus on a lot with SheEO, namely, creating a space of radical generosity.

It is an environment: Imagine if you are surrounded by radically generous people. How would that shift how you act? This is an underlying value system and core that I think we really need to focus on.

Minister Ng mentioned this earlier: If we were in more loving environments, we would all reach our potential, but being in these environments that are just not safe to get support and ask is a really big problem,

and it holds so many of us back. Redesigning and being nicer to each other—I learned this literally from my mother—is important. Generosity was underneath everything. I grew up in a family full of boys, and I thought, “How am I going to create this initiative that is called ‘generosity’ when everyone is like, womp womp?”

I was generous today; great, way to go, Vick! It is not like I nailed it; I crushed it. We do not have power words for being nice. None. We need new language for that. I just plunked radical in front of it: ‘Radical generosity’. It is a bit cooler. I am radically generous. What is that? Again, it is like we have to create new language to create new behaviours. This for me is something that we are really experimenting with.

JS: We should all be badass-kind people.

VS: Yes, goodass kind.

MN: I talked earlier about this awesome mandate to double the women entrepreneurs. Investments alone will not get us to successful entrepreneurs. Affordable child-care will help; changing parental leave rules so that a woman in a family can decide with her partner to share some of that domestic work so that he and she can make the decision so that she can keep running her company will help; then, she can continue to be promoted.

Having legislation—we just heard statistics earlier about the number of women on boards and in senior management, so a piece of legislation out there that is going to require boards that are federally regulated to disclose the makeup of gender as well as diversity on their boards will be helpful. Representation is going to matter. That disclosure and that transparency are going to matter. I would say that they hold us accountable because the policies and the social policies that we have put in place work hand in hand in partnership with the financial investments that we are making, that the private sector is making.

But having just the one without the other will not get us the results that we are looking for. We are looking for participation. Here is the ROI for everyone to consider. This government has the first women's entrepreneurship strategy. It is a \$2-billion investment.

I have a mandate to double the number of women entrepreneurs by 2025. If I do that, studies like that issued by McKinsey, tell us that we can add up to \$150 billion to the Canadian GDP. Those financial people here in the room, do you not think that is a good ROI for women's economic empowerment? I do.

Questions & Answers

JS: I can keep going forever, but we only have a few more minutes. You came to this lunch because you want to take something away from this as well, too.

I believe we have one or two roving microphones. When you do ask a question, please, target it at a member of the panel just for timing's sake as well, too. If you have a question, feel free to raise your hand.

MN: This cannot be a shy room.

JS: Really, no questions? We have one over here and then another one over here after.

Q: Hi. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with us. I found it quite interesting what you have talked about. This question goes to Jessica, since you are related to communications. I heard something interesting about something called the 'Cassandra Curse', which is related to the issues that we are having when we are trying to express an idea, to share a particular idea with someone.

There are three problems that we usually have in order to convince someone that they should do something. Number one is that we talk in a language that they do not understand; number two is that they do not relate to us; and number three is

that the changes that we are actually asking them are too much for them to handle. Based on these particular three points and based on your own experience when you are trying to deal with initiatives that support women, what are the challenges that you are actually having when you are trying to communicate this to others and change their behaviour?

JJ: That is a really good question. It reminds me more of my time working in corporate culture than in the media. Journalism is emotional labour, in the sense that if you have ever been interviewed here, you know that we are actually pretty good at putting all the cards on the table. I think in corporate culture, it is different.

I am curious to hear what some of my other colleagues think. This is probably not the direct answer to your question, but I realize that I was taken much more seriously when I told everyone I was getting an MBA. I just got treated differently. I do not think it is what we are saying. I think it is a perception issue in our culture.

JS: I am a tall, white male. They are all proxies for expertise, and I often share the stage with women who have PhDs. It is an honour to do that, but we need to change that paradigm as well, too. Does anyone else have anything to offer to that question?

Q: Great panel. Thank you very much. Michelle Albanese with TD Bank. I run our Responsible Sourcing and Supplier Diversity programs at the bank.

I guess I have a question for Minister Mary Ng. Corporations are really taking the charge and leading the way when it comes to supplier diversity, which means using suppliers who are women-owned businesses, minority, LGBT, Indigenous, veterans and disabled suppliers. I just wanted to know what the government was doing around this type of procurement. You can call it ‘social procurement’ as well, but I am wondering whether either federally and also provincially there has been any progress with government using suppliers who are also minorities.

MN: That is a great question. Yes, I have two answers to that. Number one: Government needs to be that customer. Government needs to create that supply chain, be a part of that supply chain where we are procuring from SMEs and particularly from Canadian SMEs, and Canadian SMEs that are women-owned, Indigenous-owned, owned by the different diverse groups in Canada. We are absolutely doing that. We have a program called—I apologize, because it is the government, so it is an acronym—BCIP. It is the Buyer in Canada Program. We have that. The second thing I would say is that Canada has access to \$1.5 billion

customers worldwide through the free trade agreements that we have negotiated. Through the European Union, through CETA with the Pacific Rim nations like Australia, Singapore, Japan and 12 other nations through the CPTPP and, of course—give it out to my colleague, Chrystia Freeland for bringing home—NAFTA.

MN: Canada has access to 60% of the world's economy through 12 trade agreements. We have access to these great markets, but in these free trade agreements, in particular, the CPTPP, CETA, the new NAFTA as well, there are chapters in there. There are chapters dedicated to SMEs to give our Canadian companies preferential access.

I am very excited to work on—my title is ‘Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion’, and the export promotion side is about helping Canadian companies, female entrepreneurs, become more export ready, so that we can grow.

We can grow domestically, but we can grow into those international markets because there is not a company that I have met, an entrepreneur that I have met, that does not want access to customers. And there are 1.5 billion of them worldwide, and our Canadian companies, our female entrepreneurs should get a piece of that business.

JS: We have time for one more question.

Q: My question is for Minister Ng. Amy Solomon from Neighbourhood Pharmacy. It is great to see you.

Right now in Canada there are 40,000 pharmacists. It is Pharmacist Awareness Month, and you should see your pharmacist. There are 10,500 pharmacies, and 60% of pharmacists are actually women, so we are helping you in your cause. Certainly, I hope that you have visited your local pharmacist.

MN: I have. As recent as the flu shot, locally.

Q: That is great. They can do more, obviously. Congratulations on your nomination this weekend.

MN: Thank you.

Q: I think what I would say is pharmacists are your partners in building that constructive economy, but also creating that capacity within the public health-care system beyond hospitals in terms of alleviating the wait times. That provision of services needs to be considered.

When we consider things like pharmacare and other policies, we do need to consider how we make healthcare affordable for all, but also accessible in terms of the services—when and where they need them. As a single mom who runs into the pharmacy

to get those flu shots—and I have done it for the last seven years, long before I was at Neighbourhood—it is a great service and a great access point. I would encourage you to visit your pharmacy and think about the policies I think you put out there; childcare as well.

I am going to put my personal hat on and say I hope that we make some progress towards that because it certainly will encourage more women in the workforce and just remove a barrier that is so important and critical for women in terms of working. Thank you.

MN: Yes, I agree with you. Pharmacy Awareness Month—let us plug that. That was great.

Part of my title is about promotion for small businesses.

JS: Minister of Humblebrag. I think I have to hand it over here. We are running, hopefully, on time.

KE: This was a fantastic panel. I would like to bring up our sponsor to thank the panel today. Welcome Chandran Fernando of Matrix360, and thank you, again, for sponsoring this event.

**Note of Appreciation, by Mr. Chandran Fernando,
Managing Partner, Matrix360**

Good afternoon. My name is Chandran Fernando of Matrix360. I am the Managing Partner for Matrix360.

We are an advisory platform that specializes in the talent management and workplace strategy for the private sector, specifically, for the commercial real estate and development industry.

We are very intentional with our lens of our approach. Our focus is diversity, equity and belonging in the industry. We connect the awareness to the how, because that is very important.

I would really like to thank the Empire Club again and the board of directors for hosting another important conversation this afternoon, and, on top of it, the panelists for you all to share your knowledge, your wisdom and your perspectives. It is not just about the showcasing, but it is the how-to, and that is very important. Thank you, again.

As an advocate and partner for equity and belonging, I strongly believe we must not only celebrate and have conversations one time out of the year, but conversations that lead to actions to the how such that equity is truly establishing in our workplaces, our homes and our society.

As a gay man, as a person who was born outside of Canada—so I am an immigrant—a person of colour, and some may say I am young, which I will take, and, most importantly, a business leader, I must take this opportunity to use

my voice of influence to disrupt and educate and build a stronger society where the intersectionality of women and men are embraced, showcased and advanced.

Today, the world is becoming more polarized, as we could see, and it is all divided based on factors that breed fear, bigotry, lack of accountability, ignorance and hate.

As Canadians, we have the opportunity to lead the way towards reconciliation and equity for all. After all, today's theme at the International Women's Day for 2019, is one thing: Balance for Better. As we celebrate today and the rest of the week, and hopefully 365 days of the year and then some, let us truly live in our everyday action for balance for better. I do thank you for your attendance.

Concluding Remarks, by Kent Emerson

I do want to take this moment also to recognize a young woman who has done a lot of work with me over the last months.

I want to recognize Marie, who has got a promotion and she is leaving the Empire Club as our Events Manager.

She has, since September, run 22 events. Thank you, Marie, and congratulations on your new role.

I want to recognize our Executive Director, Jehan, who has come back from maternity leave. Today is her first day back. I want to congratulate Bill, who has run things well

in her absence. Thank you. This is our Empire Club team. Thank you very much.

We are at the forefront. Today is a great example of that. We are looking for events all the time. We are dedicated to being at the forefront. Last week, we had David Lametti, our Attorney General. We have the finance minister coming, federally, on the 20th in partnership with the Toronto Board of Trade and the Canadian Club. We have the mayor of Toronto coming on March 20th. We have Ontario's finance minister coming on March 28th and a whole bunch more this season.

Thank you for coming today. I really appreciate your support of our events. Thanks, again, to Matrix360 and Spencer Stuart for being sponsors. Thanks to the Minister and all our panelists, and Jake, for running this. This has been a great event.

Meeting adjourned.