

## PRESS RELEASE

city of Almaty

March 6, 2025

### **KASE, jointly with the IFC, held the annual market open ceremony Ring the Bell for Gender Equality**

On March 6, 2025, Kazakhstan Stock Exchange JSC (KASE) in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (the IFC), as part of the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative (the SSE Initiative), organized the annual market open ceremony titled "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality." This event featured an open dialogue addressing the issue "Do women really invest less than men?" along with a discussion themed "Courage to Invent: Women in the World of Innovation."

The market open ceremony Ring the Bell for Gender Equality aims to draw the attention of the global community to the prospects for developing gender inclusiveness and supporting gender equality in the context of sustainable development policies and ESG principles.

Welcoming speeches at the event were delivered by Natalia Khoroshevskaya, Chairperson of the Management Board of KASE Clearing Centre JSC, Assel Amirbayeva, Director of the Insurance Market and Actuarial Settlements Department at the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Regulation and Development of the Financial Market, Ekaterina Benjamin, Head of the IFC Representative Office in Kazakhstan, and Dina Amrisheva, Acting Head of the UN Women Office in Kazakhstan.

"The market open ceremony, Ring the Bell for Gender Equality, serves as a significant global initiative focused on highlighting the importance of equal opportunities in business and finance. Since joining the ceremony in 2017, KASE has been dedicated to promoting gender equality principles in Kazakhstan by supporting the involvement of women in business and finance, as well as their roles in strategic management and crucial decision-making processes. We firmly believe that empowering women is vital for the sustainable growth of both the economy and society as a whole," said Natalia Khoroshevskaya.

Ekaterina Benjamin, Head of the IFC Representative Office in Kazakhstan, said: "In today's fast-paced technological landscape, where human capital is increasingly vital, achieving gender equality is not merely an issue of fairness, but also a necessary element for sustained growth and innovation. A comprehensive study conducted by the IFC in Kazakhstan has revealed that companies with a minimum of 30% female representation on their boards of directors achieve significantly better financial outcomes, especially among medium and large enterprises. In this context, the Ring the Bell for Gender Equality initiative is crucial in advancing the gender equality and fostering sustainable economic development".

The ceremony also featured a speech by Zhamilya Sarsenbayeva, Managing Director, Client Relations Department of Jusan Invest JSC and Mikhail Novoselov, Executive Director for External Relations of Freedom Finance JSC, as part of an open dialogue on

the topic "Do women really still invest less than men?" The experts discussed the topics of gender inclusivity in the context of investing in women's entrepreneurship and green finance.

The speakers at the international event discussion titled "The Courage to Invent: Women in the World of Innovation" included Zhan Karsybayev, a partner and co-founder of Big Sky Capital VC; Yerlan Isekeshv, an entrepreneur and venture investor, and co-founder of Clever Market and Teez Marketplace; Tolkyun Nurushva from Women in Tech Kazakhstan, currently serving as Client relations director at Microsoft Kazakhstan; and Laura Yeraliyeva, the founder of the Yaya startup. They discussed their success stories. The discussion was moderated by Yeldos Kuanyshbekov, Managing Director for IT – member of the Management Board of Kazakhstan Stock Exchange JSC.

The market open ceremony has become a good tradition for the financial community in Kazakhstan and serves as a venue for discussing gender diversity within the realities of contemporary business. The trading was opened with a gong strike by Yermek Mazhekenov, Deputy Chairman of KASE's Management Board, Dina Amirisheva, Acting Head of UN Women Office in Kazakhstan, Adalat Abdumanapova, IFC Program Manager for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Practices in Central Asia and Turkey, Zhanar Aikimbayeva, Deputy Chairperson of the Management Board of Altyn Bank JSC (SB China Citic Bank Corporation Ltd), and Zhamilya Sarsenbayeva, Managing Director, Client Relations Department of Jusan Invest JSC.

KASE is organizing this ceremony for the eighth consecutive time as part of the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative, which it became a member of in 2015. This event receives ongoing global support from UN Women, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Women and Exchange Traded Funds organization, and the World Federation of Exchanges. Annually, over 100 exchanges worldwide conduct a market open ceremony to celebrate the gender equality as part of the UN SSE Initiative.

A key activity of the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative is to highlight the significant role that organizations can fulfill in promoting gender equality to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to increase awareness of women's empowerment within the private sector and their access to financial resources.

The event, with a general agenda on gender inclusivity, was held on the eve of International Women's Day.

### **For reference**

Kazakhstan Stock Exchange JSC is a leading stock exchange in the Central Asian region. KASE ranks second among the CIS exchanges in terms of securities trading volume and fourth in terms of equity market capitalization among FEAS exchanges. It is a universal trading platform for corporate and government securities, bonds of international financial organizations, foreign currencies, money market transactions – repo and currency swaps, as well as derivatives. KASE is a member of the International Federation of Exchanges (WFE), the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges (FEAS), the International Association of Exchanges of the Commonwealth of Independent States (MAB CIS), the Global Association of Central Counterparties (CCP Global) and other international and domestic professional associations, as well as a participant in the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative.

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