HEMAS Holdings
Building workplaces of equality
Commitment to action
About IFC
IFC—a member of the World Bank Group—is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. We work in more than 100 countries, using our capital, expertise, and influence to create markets and opportunities in developing countries. In fiscal year 2020, we invested $22 billion in private companies and financial institutions in developing countries, leveraging the power of the private sector to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity. For more information, visit www.ifc.org.

About IFC’s Women in Work Program in Sri Lanka
Women in Work (WiW) is a five-year, $9.5 million initiative launched in partnership with the Australian government in April 2017. It is IFC’s largest, standalone country-based gender program designed to close gender gaps in the private sector while improving business performance. The program, which benefits from multisector program design and works closely with the World Bank on research, tackles women’s access to jobs and assets at the same time. It aims to increase women’s workforce participation in Sri Lanka’s private sector, create more and better jobs for women, and has the potential to increase profits and drive overall economic growth. WiW also contributes to the vision of the government of Sri Lanka where all citizens can achieve higher incomes and better standards of living by 2025.

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November 2020
Hemas Holdings (Hemas) is a leading publicly listed company with diversified interests in consumer, healthcare, mobility and leisure. With over 70 years of operations, Hemas has expanded regionally with operations in Bangladesh, West Bengal and Myanmar. Hemas provides employment to over 5,800 individuals of which 28 percent are women.

**INCREASING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**

Hemas made significant strides in increasing the number of women in decision making roles, increasing the total share of women in management by 7 percentage points to 24 percent. Women in senior and middle management both grew by 6 percentage points respectively. Hemas also made history by being the first publicly listed conglomerate in Sri Lanka to appoint a female CEO – Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson, in October 2020.

In a career spanning two decades at Hemas, Kasturi rose through the ranks to having worked in aviation, travel, maritime, logistics and pharmaceuticals sectors of the group. As part of a planned succession Kasturi took on the role of Deputy CEO and was appointed to the Board of Hemas Holdings PLC in July 2020. She has attended many leadership programs over the span of her career, most notably the Senior Executive Leadership Program at Harvard Business School.

**LISTENING TO THE ‘VOICE OF WOMEN’**

Hemas’ employee resource group, Voice of Women (VOW), was launched in late 2017 with the aim of supporting the recruitment, retention and advancement of women at all levels across the group. Through VOW, childcare, maternity leave and after-hours transport were identified as the top challenges women face in maintaining work-life balance. As a response, the company introduced a back-up childcare facility and lactation room in the head office and maternity leave was extended from the government mandated 84 days to 100 days, with a further option of 10 working days at no-pay. Fathers were also given 10 working days paternity leave. Parents of adoptive children under the age of one were given equivalent maternity and paternity leave benefits, and half maternity benefits for adopted children between the ages of one and five. To provide safer transport after working hours, employees were given facilities to reimburse taxi services to avoid public transportation.

**BUSINESS RESULTS:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Increase from Previous Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of women on the board of directors</td>
<td></td>
<td>10% share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of women in senior management</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>to 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall share of women in leadership</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>to 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of women in middle management</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>to 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of women in the executive cadre</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>to 35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women comprise 28% of overall workforce, exceeding the company target of 25% women in the workforce by 2020</td>
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INNOVATIVE CHILD CARE SOLUTION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYEES

Hemas Holdings set up a back-up childcare initiative as a pilot project at its headquarters, Hemas House. Designed to accommodate up to 10 children aged three to 12 years, parent employees ‘hot desk’ from an adjoining workstation. The space was designed to be used as an option when regular childcare arrangements failed, and the children’s age group specifically chosen as it was agreed this age could be managed by parents without the additional support of a creche supervisor. The facility also provides a MumZone for lactating mothers and a MedZone for all employees needing medical rest. Hemas is monitoring the facility and tracking its impact on employee satisfaction and retention.

FACING COVID-19

Despite significant logistical challenges the company’s pharmaceutical distributions responded to the Government’s call to ensure essential pharmaceutical products were available across the country. Hemas’ e-Commerce venture Healthnet, experienced a significant spike in demand.

Staff across Hemas’ factories, hospitals, hotels and those in sales and distribution operations have been equipped with safety gear and protective equipment. Wherever possible work from home facilities were enabled and connectivity provided with dongles or internet usage allowances.

The extension of 16 days might not sound like much, but it really helped me as a new mom. I also received a two-hour daily feeding time that I could take whenever was flexible for me, until my baby turned one. I found that a great benefit”

Dinali Sugathadasa,
Brand Manager at Hemas Consumer Brands

Whenever I’m running late, my sons come in after school and stay at the childcare space at work. This is a great facility as I can keep an eye on them until I wrap up work, and they can do their homework or watch tv. I know they’re safe and can keep an eye on their homework as well"

Anushka Sabanayagam,
Senior Brand Manager
The IFC-DFAT Woman in Work program in Sri Lanka, partnering with leading private sector companies, aims to demonstrate that corporate performances can improve from closing gaps between women and men in the private sector.