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PRESS RELEASE

Bringing business women together

Women in Business NI and Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce held their annual joint networking event in Belfast yesterday which was attended by 150 business people from across Northern Ireland.

The event, sponsored by the Equality Commission Northern Ireland, provided an effective marketing platform for members of both local networks to raise their business profile, build mutually beneficial business relationships and expand their markets. The initiative by Women in Business NI and Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce is extremely popular with the local business community that for a third year running registrations closed many weeks ago due to the event's high demand.

Speaking after the event Edel Doherty, Chair of Women in Business NI commented: "In this current challenging economic environment, being able to network with likeminded business people is a great mechanism to identify relevant and beneficial contacts and spark new ideas. In addition to gaining potential new customers, businesses can also gain worthwhile market information from other businesses. Even information gleaned from a conversation can provide new opportunities to help grow local businesses."

Oonagh O'Reilly, Business Development Director at Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce commented:

“Joint Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Women in Business NI events are designed to encourage business relations and inter-trading, and provide fantastic, cost-effective ways to meet new contacts, network casually and inter-trade with fellow members and other local businesses. Today’s event helps keep business and money in the local economy which is essential to the future of Northern Ireland plc.”

Evelyn Collins CBE, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission NI commented:

“Events like today’s provide an opportunity for women to network, to share ideas and to get encouragement and inspiration from other female business leaders and entrepreneurs. The role of women in business is no longer simply a gender equality issue; it is a broader economic issue that has significant consequences for our future prosperity and growth. Getting equality right, not only in terms of gender but across all the grounds covered by the legislation, is a key ingredient for every successful business regardless of size.”

Also present at the event was guest speaker Valerie Pierce, creator of the Clear and Critical Thinking training programmes for Managers in both the public sector and private industry.