



## 2017 IWECE Conference PRESS RELEASE

HELENE ÅKERSTROM HARTMAN TO RECEIVE THE 2017 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL CHALLENGE (IWECE) AWARD

*The organization hosts a gathering of some of the world's most successful women-owned businesses on Nov. 12-14 in Washington State, USA*

November, 9th, 2017

Helene Åkerström Hartman, CEO and Owner at Orbaden Spa & Resort will receive the 2017 IWECE Award during the organization's 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference, to be held in Redmond, Washington this November. The conference, titled 'Connecting Women Businesses Globally: Accelerating Growth Through Innovation & Technology' is sponsored by Microsoft, who is also hosting the event at their global headquarters in Washington State on November 12-14, 2017. This year's conference has a strong focus on technology, cybersecurity and innovation, issues that are pivotal to IWECE's sophisticated global network of women-owned businesses, whose combined revenue exceeds US\$25 billion per year.

Chamber Trade Sweden is thrilled to nominate Helene Åkerström Hartman, for her trailblazing work. Owner and CEO of Orbaden Spa and Resort in Hälsingland Sweden, Helene has brought new life and international wild life tourism to the region. Starting the company 10 years ago, Helene is today well established in the Swedish spahotel and conference business attracting the world to Hälsingland and Orbaden.

"My motto has been to take internationalization back to my home village, to think global but act local", says Helene. I wanted to bring back development, growth and jobs to my home rural community. Combining relaxation and sports with local culture, nature and wildlife is an important part of the Orbaden concept. We offer our guests the time to relax and reflect while experiencing Swedish nature and wildlife, says Helene.

The hotel has also attracted Swedish international celebrities to design their personal suites including Olympic and world champion Carolina Klüft, actor Peter Stormare and model Victoria Silvstedt. I am personally very involved in animal and wildlife conservation in my community and region as well as in Africa, says Helene. Orbaden also has a special "Rainbow suite" where part of the profit is donated to supporting HBTQ refugees in Sweden.

We are further honoured to be an active part of IWECE, and to participate in this year's conference and celebrate IWECE's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a milestone for global women's entrepreneurship," stated Charlotte Kalin, CEO of The Chamber Trade Sweden. IWECE is a New York-based international economic empowerment organization exclusively for women business owners, formed in 2007 with the assistance of the U.S. Department of State. In addition to the State Department, its founders include the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce (MCC), FICCI/FLO Chamber in New Delhi. IWECE's mission is to develop a global business network for successful women entrepreneurs, helping them gain and expand access to international markets by presenting a platform to exchange knowledge, experience and connections, and to promote dialogue among women entrepreneurs and business leaders throughout the world.

For the past ten years, IWECE has gathered some of the world's largest and most successful women-owned companies in an intensive 3-day program to inform, connect and celebrate the work of women entrepreneurs from all corners of

the globe. The conference will close with an awards gala that will celebrate the ground-breaking work of 53 new awardees from Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia and the Americas.

“I am honored to accept the 2017 IWEC Award at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference in Washington state. I look forward to meeting with other women entrepreneurs from across the world, and to learn from their experience, challenges and success. This year’s conference is doubly important given the very timely topics surrounding technology as it applies to my business growth and sustainability,” said Helene Hartman of her nomination.

“It is a privilege to invite Helene Åkerström Hartman into IWEC network of awardees, and role models for women’s business development efforts in Sweden”, says Charlotte Kalin, CEO of Chamber Trade Sweden.

The November conference also marks the first time that IWEC welcomes a Conference Chairperson, and welcomes Her Royal Highness Princess Noor Asem of Jordan, who will provide part of the welcoming remarks and will address the audience on empowering women’s entrepreneurship in her region. Other conference speakers include one of the most influential businesswomen from China, Yang Lan, owner of Sun Media, one of the largest media conglomerates in that country; she was also the ambassador of the Beijing Olympic Games. She is joined by new IWEC Board member and keynote speaker Ibukun Awosika, Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the First Bank of Nigeria Limited; Melanie Alavi Director of Customer Technology Marketing from UPS; Fernando Hernández, Director or Supplier Diversity at Microsoft, Peter Martínez, CEO of Game Changer Tec, Jackie Sturm, Sr. VP of Supply Chain and Innovation at Intel, Aylton de Souza, Worldwide Enterprise Mobility and Security Business Lead at Microsoft, and other key drivers of innovation, technology and business development.

“IWEC understands that providing access, resources, and support to help enable the success of female entrepreneurs is key to ensuring women’s active, sustainable participation in the global economy, and contribute to close the gender gap. We provide a global forum to exchange knowledge, experience, and connectivity among women business owners, setting the stage for education, disruptive business opportunities, roads to joint ventures, and promoting social dialog among women entrepreneurs and business leaders,” said Ruth A. Davis, Chairwoman, IWEC.

Attendance for the exclusive event is capped at 250 attendees. Learn more about the conference, or register at <http://bit.ly/2poMbvS>.

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