

# PRESS RELEASE

## Sodexo holds high-profile gender equality debate

18 December 2013

**Sodexo, the world's largest services company, saw some of its most senior female leaders gather in London this month to promote gender diversity.**

Influential UK media, business and political figures formed the panel on board Bateaux London's *mv Symphony* to debate 'The respective roles of business, society and Government in promoting gender equality' in front of more than 100 people including 60 representatives from amongst Sodexo's clients on Wednesday 4 December.

Facilitated by Sodexo's global chief diversity officer Dr Rohini Anand, the panel consisted of:

- The Right Honourable Hazel Blears MP
- Deborah Rowland – head of FM policy and strategy for central government in the Cabinet Office
- Simon Fanshawe OBE – writer and broadcaster
- Harry Gaskell – managing partner of EY (formally known as Ernst & Young) and chair of the Employers network for equality and inclusion
- Debbie White – chief executive officer of Sodexo UK and Ireland.

The event was arranged as part of a week's activities in the capital for the Sodexo Women's International Forum for Talent (Swift), a group of the most senior managers from across the global business. Swift is co-chaired by Dr Anand and Sophie Bellon – who was recently announced as the next chair of Sodexo Group and who also attended the panel debate.

Founded in 2009, Swift is committed to boosting female representation at all levels of management. In particular, Swift has set a global objective that by 2015 women will represent 25 per cent of Sodexo's top 300 managers. So far the figure globally stands at 23 per cent, up from 17 per cent in 2008.

Across the world, women represent 38 per cent of Sodexo's board of directors, 40 per cent of Sodexo's management and in Europe 11 country chief executive officers are women.

**Debbie White, chief executive officer of Sodexo UK and Ireland, said:** *“Sodexo has a very clear business commitment to gender diversity, and as a mum of three and a female chief executive I also have a very personal passion regarding this topic. It was a privilege to host Swift in London and I’m pleased to be able to share our experience of promoting gender equality across the globe to our clients and stakeholders in the UK and Ireland.*

*“Sodexo Group has an aspirational objective for 25 per cent of its top 300 managers to be women by 2015. In the UK and Ireland we’ve already surpassed that target, and 38 per cent of our executive team are women, which is a fantastic achievement.*

*“There is a clear role for businesses like Sodexo to encourage gender diversity in the workplace and the Government have a role in making businesses think differently. But ultimately, I believe society has a major role to play in bringing about the cultural changes that will improve gender diversity and equality: making that happen is everyone’s responsibility.”*

## Ends

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### About Sodexo

#### Sodexo in the UK and Ireland

Sodexo employs over 35,000 people, and delivers quality of life services to clients at some 2,300 locations in the corporate, healthcare, education, leisure, justice and defence sectors.

With an annual turnover of over £1bn, Sodexo delivers a range of services ranging from catering, cleaning, reception to asset management, security, laboratory and grounds maintenance services, enabling clients to focus on their core business.

Sodexo Motivation Solutions in the UK provides benefit and reward services such as SayShopping vouchers; public benefits; and employee benefits such as childcare vouchers and engagement surveys.

### About Sodexo

Founded in 1966 by Pierre Bellon, Sodexo is the global leader in services that improve Quality of Life, an essential factor in individual and organizational performance. Operating in 80 countries, Sodexo serves 75 million consumers each day through its unique combination of On-site Services, Benefits and Rewards Services and Personal and Home Services. Through its more than 100 services, Sodexo provides clients an integrated offering developed over more than 45 years of experience: from reception, safety, maintenance and cleaning, to foodservices and facilities and equipment management; from Meal Pass, Gift Pass and Mobility Pass benefits for employees to in-home assistance and concierge services. Sodexo’s success and

performance are founded on its independence, its sustainable business model and its ability to continuously develop and engage its 428,000 employees throughout the world.

**Sodexo worldwide Key figures** (August 31, 2013)

**18.4 billion** euro consolidated revenue

**428,000** employees

**18<sup>th</sup>** largest employer worldwide

**80** countries

**33,300** sites

**75 million** consumers served daily

**11.4 billion** euro market capitalization (as of November 13, 2013)