**21 September 2019**

**IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE**

**WBAF is delighted to announce that H.E. Prof Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the 6th President of the Republic of Mauritius, will represent Mauritius at the Grand Assembly of the World Business Angels Investment Forum as High Commissioner.

In June 2016, she was on the *Forbes* List of the World’s 100 Most Powerful Women and 1st among the Top 100 Women on the Africa *Forbes* List in 2017 and 2019. She was honoured as one of *Foreign Policy’s* 2015 Global Thinkers.** **Gurib-Fakim is the first woman to be elected as president of Mauritius and is the third woman to have served as Head of State, following Queen Elizabeth II and Monique Ohsan Bellepeau.**

On 5 June 2015, H.E. Prof. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim was sworn in as the 6th president of Mauritius and its first female president, and she served in that capacity until March 2018.

She was elevated to the position of Grand Commander in the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean, the highest distinction of merit in Mauritius. She was also awarded the Legion of Honour from the government of France in 2016. In 2017, she received the United States Pharmacopoeia-CePat Award for lifelong achievement and the American Botanical Council’s Norman Farnsworth Award for Excellence in Botanical Research. In 2018, she received the Order of St George at the Semperopernball in Dresden, Germany.

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**The inclusion of Mauritius in WBAF provides a wide range of opportunities for start-ups, scaleups and high growth businesses in the country and opens doors for economic development**

With this new recognition, Mauritius has joined the largest forum of the world’s equity investment markets and will now be able to connect more easily with the global investors market, which will open up splendid opportunities for the country. Now local Mauritius angel investors, incubation centres, accelerators, private equity funds, co-investment funds, technology parks, corporate ventures and aspiring entrepreneurs will have more opportunity to connect with global leaders in the same field.

Baybars Altuntas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the World Business Angels Investment Forum says, ‘‘*As an affiliated partner of the G20 Global Partnerships for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), the WBAF supports start-ups, develops entrepreneurial ecosystems, and helps venture capital and companies connect with international companies, fin-techs and other relevant institutions. We are confident about our contribution to the economic development of the country by facilitating connections with entrepreneurial ecosystems. We strongly believe that Mauritius will soon become a country that can foster the development of its economy in a more entrepreneurial atmosphere.*

***Welcoming H.E. Prof Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the 6th President of the Republic of Mauritius***

*It is with sincere pleasure that I welcome H.E. Prof. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the 6th President of the Republic of Mauritius, to the world’s early-stage equity and capital markets. The world economy will be enhanced by espousing her values.*

*I believe that, with its 91 High Commissioners, Senators and International Partners in 58 countries and by working together across borders, with a common vision, and with these smart dynamics in mind, we are well placed to bring about positive change in the global economy and to help create new jobs, social justice and freedom all around the world.’’*

**About the World Business Angels Investment Forum (WBAF)**

An affiliated partner of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), the World Business Angels Investment Forum (WBAF) is an international organisation aiming to ease access to finance for businesses from start-up to scale-up, with the ultimate goal of generating more jobs and more social justice worldwide. It is committed to collaborating globally to empower world economic development by creating innovative financial instruments for innovators, start-ups, and SMEs. The Forum interacts with leaders in all areas of society, first and foremost in business and political spheres, to help assess needs and establish goals, bearing in mind that the public interest is of paramount importance. WBAF engages a wide range of institutions, both public and private, local and international, commercial and academic to help shape the global agenda.

[www.wbaforum.org](http://www.wbaforum.org)

**About GPFI**

The Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) is an inclusive platform for all G20 countries, interested non-G20 countries, and relevant stakeholders to carry forward work on financial inclusion, including implementation of the G20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan endorsed at the G20 Summit in Seoul. Queen Maxima of the Netherlands is the Honorary Patron of the GPFI.

[www.gpfi.org](http://www.gpfi.org)

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