

Leading BY EXAMPLE

BY CARLA NEVES MATIAS

The Iberian lawyers' initiative not only has the merit of highlighting women who, through their life path, have managed to assert themselves in a world that is still dominated by the male gender, but also to contribute to education for the inclusion of diversity, whether it be gender, physical condition, religion, race, or belief. It was an honour to have been distinguished and to be together with so many inspiring women.

It will still take many more actions and initiatives like this one so that women do not have to prove themselves more than men, earn less than men, and have more responsibilities in family life. However, I always prefer to look at what has already been achieved and believe that the future will bring the desired changes and will honour all those who have con-

tributed to the change. And if there is one place where, out of ethical and moral duty, we should foster change, that place, in a broad sense, is the law firms and the legal departments of companies where **leading by example** will make all the difference and send a strong and powerful message to the community.

So have the companies and offices where the award winners work, but the work does not end here. Each location now has an even greater role to play in building this future.

SRS Advogados, where I entered as a trainee in 1999, accepted my dual condition of belonging to minorities: being a woman and having reduced mobility. At the time, believe me, it was certainly an enormous challenge. In any case, the firm where I am now a part-

ner in the litigation and arbitration department has always had an inclusion policy, in its various forms, what a pride and what a responsibility to honour this legacy in the future that belongs to us all.

Let me also state that it is up to us women to convey to the young people (women and men) that we educate or lead that diversity and inclusion is – and it should be – something natural and not questionable. Making it clear that only competence and performance can and should be measured, but always on the basis of the person, the human being, as such.

Last but certainly not least to all men – and there are already many of them – who support and encourage the empowerment of women in all areas of life, my (our) admiration, for contributing to changing the status quo. Keep working with us!



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