

# New CIMA president urges accounting profession to step forward and build trust, opportunity and prosperity

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First-ever Asian woman elected as CIMA president and co-chair of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants.



Melanie Janine Kanaka, FCMA, CGMA, has been elected the 89th President of The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), the world's largest professional body of management accountants. She will also serve as co-chair of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (the Association), which represents the combined membership of CIMA and the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA).

During her year in office, Melanie will focus on reinforcing the accounting and finance profession's commitment to being a trusted adviser for their organisations and serving the public interest. In addition, she will champion the profession's need to continuously upskill and reskill to meet ever-evolving market demands. Melanie will also put a strong emphasis on inspiring younger generations to join the dynamic profession, advancing the profession's digital skills and capabilities, and the importance of fostering diversity, equity and inclusion.

Melanie will work closely with Anoop Natwar Mehta, CPA, CGMA, who will serve as AICPA chair and chair of the Association, to represent the world's largest public and management accounting bodies (AICPA and

CIMA) to meet the demands of a constantly changing, disruptive world.

On her appointment, Melanie said: "It is a true privilege to have been chosen by my peers to serve our members and students around the world, and represent our profession on the global stage".

"Over the past few years, the profession provided vital support and guidance to organisations to help them, not only survive, but also adapt and thrive in a world that has irremediably changed. As the world continues to undergo radical, disruptive changes at an accelerating speed, we must, as professionals, offer bold leadership.

She continued: "Now is the time for the profession to lean in and take the next step forward. We must make sure that we continue to deliver innovative solutions to create value, build trust, seize new opportunities and help deliver prosperity for individuals, organisations, economies and society as whole."

Melanie is the first-ever Asian woman to be elected president of CIMA. She became a CIMA member in 1992 and obtained her fellowship in 2000. She has been an active member of CIMA for over three decades and has held several volunteer positions both in Sri Lanka, her home country, and internationally. Melanie also currently serves on the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants' Board of Directors.

Melanie has extensive experience in corporate finance and development banking across the USA, Germany and South Asia. She currently leads the finance and administration function for the World Bank in Sri Lanka and Maldives where she is responsible for finance, resource management and performance review and is part of the World Bank's South Asia

regional unit.

Melanie is a Fulbright Scholar and an accredited SAP consultant who holds an MBA specialising in international finance and corporate strategy from Emory University's Goizueta Business School in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. She also holds a 1st class B. Com (Hons) degree from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka, and is a distinguished alumna of Bishop's College, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Other appointments ratified at the CIMA annual general meeting:

- Sarah Ghosh, FCMA, CGMA, was elected as deputy president
- Simon Bittlestone, FCMA, CGMA, was elected as vice president

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