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Dr Rao is the Executive Director, INSEAD Africa Initiative, INSEAD Emerging Markets Institute & Gender Initiative, and Asia Director, INSEAD Hoffman Global Institute for Business & Society. Her research is in gender diversity in corporate leadership, male allyship, millennials & inter-generational influences on the workplace, and emerging markets strategy. She is frequently invited to speak on related topics and is quoted/ published in leading business publications. She started her career with an MNC bank and went on to become Managing Director of an Indonesian conglomerate, before making a serendipitous transition to education. Prior to joining INSEAD, she was Associate Professor of Strategy at the S.P. Jain Centre of Management, Singapore. She has a doctorate in leadership diversity from the Singapore Management University and an MBA from IIM Bangalore. She currently sits on the boards of a non-profit organization and a think tank and is Ambassador, Power Women of India; Council of Leaders, Women Icons Network; International Advisory Committee, Mody University; and Ambassador, She2030.

Dr Rao is passionate about supporting women managers to make fulfilling work-life decisions, aiming to do this through active sponsorship rather than mentorship alone. She believes that business has the potential to be a force for good, led by managers who value social impact and are committed to the UN Sustainability Development Goals.