SNEF to do survey on women in top posts

By LIVIA YAP

IT is well known that women are under-represented on boards and in senior management but the reasons are still unknown.

A new survey on gender diversity intends to find out exactly why this phenomenon is still around in a modern city such as Singapore. It will be conducted by the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) later this year.

Part of a study by the Diversity Task Force (DTF), the survey is targeted at CEOs of Singapore Exchange-listed companies and statutory boards.

Speaker of Parliament Halimah Yacob initiated the task force when she was minister of state at the Ministry of Social and Family Development to examine the state of gender diversity on boards and in senior management in Singapore, and its impact on corporate performance and governance.

The task force is headed by Mildred Tan, managing director of Ernst & Young Advisory. Members are Yeo Lian Sim, chief regulatory & risk officer at the Singapore Exchange (SGX) and council member of the Singapore Institute of Directors; Patrick Ang, deputy managing director, Rajah and Tann LLP; Koh Juan Kiat, executive director, SNEF; Laura Hwang, president, Singapore Council of Women’s Organisation and co-chair of BoardAgender; and Junie Foo, co-chair of BoardAgender.

According to EY’s Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders Report, although women account for around 48 per cent of the overall public sector workforce, they represent less than 20 per cent of public sector leadership across the G-20.

The Singapore Board Diversity Report 2012: The Female Factor, by BoardAgender and the NUS Centre for Governance, Institutions and Organisations, showed that in Singapore, the proportion of women on boards in SGX-listed companies was only 7.3 per cent in 2011. Statutory boards fared better at 19.8 per cent.

The DTF is expected to produce a report with recommendations to the government and businesses by early 2014.