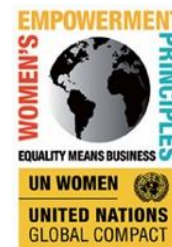


Business Partners for Gender Equality: Multipliers for Development

2016 Women's Empowerment Principles Annual Event

15-16 March 2016



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Delivering for the 2030 Development Agenda - Gender Equality as a Goal and a Solution

Agreed upon by all UN Member States, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global framework for solving the world's greatest challenges. Participants of the 2016 Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Annual Event noted that the inclusion of SDG 5 –

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – reinforces that gender equality is a top development priority in itself. However, participants also noted many gender-specific targets across the SDGs and recognized the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment to achieving a wide range of development objectives. From addressing the particular needs of female refugees in Brazil, to the multiplier effect of investing in women entrepreneurs, to the business opportunity and case for preventing and

addressing violence against women, to supporting access to women's healthcare and family planning, speakers throughout the two days demonstrated how business can maximize its contribution to the SDGs by ensuring respect for and taking action to support women and girls.



Challenge the Status Quo and Address Conscious and Unconscious Biases



Challenging the stereotype and common assumption that there are not enough qualified women experts to speak at conferences and events, Lise Kingo, the Executive Director of the UN Global Compact, announced the initiative's commitment to ending all male panels by adopting the panel pledge in the opening remarks on 15 March 2016. The UN Global Compact headquarters will not take part in or host panels comprised only of male participants. Ms. Kingo stated, "This is the moment to stop making excuses and start challenging the status quo. There is no shortage of qualified women, and we need the voices of women at important events

across the world. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will require greater equality and opportunity for women and girls everywhere. And one practical step is pledging to make both women's and men's perspectives heard on stages everywhere." UN Global Compact participants and

Local Networks, as well as WEPs signatories, are encouraged to make their own pledges to bring gender balance to speaking engagements. Read the [Executive Update](#).

In an interactive training on 16 March 2016, event participants learned practical techniques to nudge the unconscious mind to be more inclusive.

An Integrated and Collaborative Approach is Needed: The Women's Empowerment Principles Provide the Solution

Advancing the SDGs, including SDG5, requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders. While governments have a responsibility to lead the way by setting national implementation plans and preparing an enabling environment (including the removal of legal barriers to women's empowerment), private sector action will be key to achieving SDG5 and advancing the many gender specific targets across the SDGs. The WEPs event highlighted a [new report](#) by Ernst & Young, which showcases how business efforts to implement the WEPs directly support national and global sustainable development priorities. Speakers at the event called for greater collaboration between government, business and other stakeholders and promoted the integrated approach provided by the WEPs framework, noting that ad hoc approaches only yield incremental results. To support companies in mapping progress across the seven Principles, identifying gaps and finding solutions, the Head of the Inter-American Development Bank, Mr. Moreno, announced a new collaboration to develop a Gap-Analysis Tool for the WEPs. Supporters include UN Women, the Governments of Japan and Germany, KPMG, Itaipu, and The Coca Cola Company



Men, Families and Communities Agree- Gender Equality is Not Just a Women's Issue



Gender equality is not just a women's issue, but one of men, families, communities and economies. To advance gender equality, it is essential to engage men in the conversation. Over the two days, speakers highlighted concrete and actionable steps for male middle managers to take in order to change organizational culture in support of gender equality, as well as the business case for investing in childcare solutions that work for both men and women.



Josh Levs, author of *All In* and former Reporter for CNN and NPR, explained how the work-first system is failing parents and perpetuating the burden of care on women. He stated, "too often, society believes that being a good mom and a career woman are mutually exclusive." He also noted that men want to spend more time with their children so it is time to reform policies to allow them to do so.

Michael Kaufman, Co-Founder of the White Ribbon Campaign and Senior Fellow at Instituto Promundo, reminded participants that in addition to challenging gender stereotypes that negatively impact women, we should also challenge the unrealistic overly masculine images of men and culture.

Setting Ambitious Goals and Measuring Results

In order to do its part to advance gender equality and achieve the SDGs, business will need to set ambitious corporate goals and identify corporate targets to track and report on progress. The SDGs provide a set of common indicators that enable a platform among various stakeholders to connect and partner to drive impact. During the Annual Event, companies shared how collecting data drives organizational change including increasing gender balance in management levels, integrating women into supply chains and creating cultural and mindset changes. One panelist shared how having concrete data on the correlation between gender balanced teams and financial and non-financial returns helped engage men to create change, while another panelist spoke about how collecting data identified new opportunities for growth.



Economically Empowering the Next Generation of Change Agents



Today's youth steer their peers, parents, leaders and business and will ultimately drive the change we need to achieve the SDGs. The closing panel of the WEPs Event showcased young women and men who are breaking stereotypes and changing mindsets to ensure future opportunities for women and girls. Panelists recognized that as technology and innovation becomes more advanced, the types of skills and job opportunities are changing. However to date, skill development for youth has been male dominated. In order to ensure gender equality progress for future generations it will be essential to equally equip and empower young women with the necessary skills and technical expertise to fill the skills gap. Participants highlighted business as a vehicle to create opportunities and choices for young women and girls.