



EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS:

Putting Principles into Practice

Women's Empowerment Principles One Year Later

9 - 10 March 2011

The SUNY Global Center, New York City

Women's Empowerment Principles in Brief

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

“When you embrace these Principles, you join a great and gathering movement to unleash the power of women and change the world.”

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon,
United Nations Secretary-General

“Carrying out the Principles does more than raise the bottom line. It creates an environment that is better for the health of individuals, the strength of families, and respect for everyone’s human rights.”

Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro,
United Nations Deputy Secretary-General



EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS: PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

On 9-10 March 2011, one year after the launch of the *Women's Empowerment Principles – Equality Means Business (WEPs)*, the UN Global Compact and UN Women convened stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, Government and the UN at the SUNY Global Center in New York City to take stock of how the companies are putting WEPs into practice to empower women. The event also observed the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The UN Global Compact and UN Women express their sincere appreciation to H.E. Mr. Ban, Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General and Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, the UN Deputy Secretary-General for their support, engagement and encouragement. The initiative owes an enormous debt to UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet and UN Global Compact Office Executive Director Georg Kell. The WEPs team sends its gratitude to all panellists, participants, colleagues and conveys a special acknowledgement to Linda Tarr-Whelan for her skillful moderation over the two days. This meeting report outlines the rich discussion about the implementation of the WEPs and next steps to strengthen the initiative.

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Academic Arrangements Abroad	Deloitte LLP
Accenture	Demos
Alcan Iceland Ltd	Demos and the American Prospect
Alcatel-Lucent	Domini Social Investments LLC
American University Women & Politics Institute	Edelman/Walmart
Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology	Eletrabras
Arla Foods amba	Endesa
Banco do Brasil	Eng. Aja Eze Foundation, Inc.
Bloomberg Family Foundation	EPCAT_USA
BNP Paribas	Ernst & Young, LLP
BPW Australia	Family Violence Prevention Fund
BPW International	Femmes Africa Solidarité
C.I.D.	Fersol Indústria e Comércio S.A..
CAIM	Fritch Construction Inc
Caixa Econômica Federal	Furnas
Calvert Asset Management Company, Inc.	Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
Capgemini	Georgetown University
Catalyst	Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria
Ceres, Inc.	Global Business Initiative on Human Rights
Ceylon Asset Management/	Global Compact Sri Lanka
Cherie Blair Foundation for Women	Hydra Products and Consulting C.O.
Clinton Global Initiative	IBM Corporation
Corporate Women Directors International	ILO
Corston-Smith Asset Management Sdn Bhd	INCCATI Sistemas Ltda.
CRD Analytics	International Finance Corporation
Cx Catalysts	International Trade Centre
Dean's Beans Organic Coffee Company	International Women's Coffee Alliance
	Itaipu Binacional

Japan External Trade Organization New
York Office
Japan University
JSL Stainless Ltd.
KPMG
La Pietra Coalition
Legalitas Quality Assurance
Levi Strauss & Co.
Lojas Renner S.A./Instituto Lojas Renner
Marriott International
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New Faces New Voices
New Future Foundation
New Zealand Human Rights Commission
Nikkei America, Inc.
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Quantum Leaps, Inc.
Rockefeller Foundation
San Francisco Department on the Status of Women
sanofi-aventis U.S.
Save the Children
The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
Sel Group International
SERPRO
Seven Bar Foundation
Skats Leadership Development Consult
St. Boniface University College
Sumitomo Chemical America, Inc
Symantec Corporation
The CSR Group
The Dow Chemical Company
The Jacquelyn and Gregory Zehner Foundation
UN NGO Sustainability Inc
UNDP
UNICEF
VIP Basket Store
Vital Voices Global Partnership
WEConnect International, Inc.
Women Thrive Worldwide
Women's Network for a Sustainable Future
World Economic Forum
World Fashion and Fashion For Development
Zonta International

ABOUT THE WEPs

The *Women's Empowerment Principles* (WEPs) offer guidance on empowering women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of a partnership between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact. The WEPs were officially launched in March 2010, following a year-long international, multi-stakeholder consultation process. For more information see: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/equality_means_business.html

In the one year since the launch of the WEPs, more than 180 top executives, representing a broad range of sectors internationally, asserted their commitment to the WEPs' empowerment agenda by signing the CEO Statement of Support. For an updated list of signers, see: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/WEPs_CEO_Statement_of_Support_Signatories.pdf

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS – DAY 1

Opening Remarks:

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General

UN Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, opened the Equality Means Business: Putting Principles into Practice event, by recognizing the Women's Empowerment Principles as a key element of the UN's broader efforts to engage with the private sector and to realize women's empowerment and equality.

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon thanked UN Women and the UN Global Compact for convening the event and applauded the more than 180 CEOs that have signed the CEO Statement of Support, noting however, that the commitment of thousands more would be needed to reach a tipping point.

The Secretary-General also noted that business has the reach and capital to be a significant actor on women's empowerment by using the WEPs. He underscored the importance of engagement saying the invisible barrier that women face is made of iron, rather than glass and that the business sector possessed the ideas and innovation necessary to help shatter the "iron ceiling" blocking women's leadership. He urged companies to implement the WEPs and enlist others to make gender equality a reality.



Leadership Roundtable: Advancing Women, Advancing Business, Advancing Rights – Leading the Way

In the first session, international leaders discussed their efforts to advance and empower women in their companies/organizations and spheres of influence and how the Women's Empowerment Principles complement, support and enhance their equality agendas.

❖ **The Business Case** Leaders reaffirmed the business case for the empowerment of women, pointing to new research and reports, such as Deloitte's '[The Gender Dividend](#)', which estimates the true potential of women in the global economy to be 20 trillion dollars; Calvert's report, '[Examining the Cracks in the Ceiling](#)', and Pax World Fund's white paper, '[Gender Equality as an Investment Concept](#)', among many interesting references, that outline the investment case for gender diversity. Participants noted the value of women as employees, clients and stakeholders.

❖ **Corporate Leadership** Panelists agreed that strong corporate leadership is key to the implementation of the WEPs and recognized that signing the CEO Statement of Support is a crucial first step. However there was consensus that it is equally important for top leaders remain actively engaged and supportive as their companies begin to implement the WEPs, looking at benchmarks and progress reports.

❖ **Internal and External** Participants stated the importance of empowering women *internally*, by creating policies and programs that support the wellbeing and advancement of women within the

organization. However, participants also underscored that businesses could do much more to support the empowerment of women *externally* through public policy engagement, advocacy and by supporting women's initiatives worldwide.

❖ **Reporting** A common theme shared by participants was the opportunities and challenges associated with measuring and reporting. While business representatives noted that tracking and measuring progress can help ensure that the company's gender equality goals and targets are being met, they also recognized that diversity reporting remains rather new for business – despite progress made with regard to sustainability reporting – and may pose particular challenges to companies with limited financial and human resources, including SMEs. Participants called attention to existing resources, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines and the UNGC's Communication on Progress.



❖ **Implementation of the Principles in Different Contexts** Participants noted that companies will take different paths to implement the WEPs depending on their size, industry, geographical location and their corporate culture.

Advancing Women in the Workplace, Marketplace and Community: Reports from the Frontlines (Two Sessions Combined)

These sessions explored how businesses are beginning to turn the 'Principles into Practice'. Participants began by discussing the hard decisions companies are making and the actions they are taking to make the goals of the WEPs a reality. They then focused on the specific policies and practices that companies are putting into place with regards to human resources and recruitment, management and board leadership to address discrimination and promote diversity.

❖ **First Steps** Participants shared first steps taken to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles. Some companies targeted a particular element of the WEPs, such as recruitment practices, reporting a notable increase in the number of women hired. Other companies have started the process by taking a broader look at their current policies, programs and workforce composition in order to identify gaps and areas in need of improvement. Levi Strauss, for example, has established a high-level taskforce, representing relevant departments throughout the organization focused on WEPs alignment and implementation.

❖ **Engaging Men** It was noted that in order to empower women, men must be part of the solution to help drive equality. Participants recognized the importance of engaging men in dialogue, training and education concerning gender equality. They insisted on the need to encourage both men and women to provide mentorship at all levels as well as support to women in key decision-making roles.

❖ **Education and Training** Participants agreed that proactive measures must be taken in order to ensure that women receive the education, training and mentoring necessary to qualify for top positions.

❖ **Work/Life Balance** The panelists and the audience acknowledged that the vast share of family responsibilities such as caring for the young or elderly typically falls on women. In order to achieve gender equality, responsibilities outside of the workplace should be shared more equally between men and women. To encourage this, business should support both men and women employees. Brazilian company leaders affirmed their experience of the business value of policies that provide adequate maternal and paternal leave as well as on-site childcare.

❖ **Non-Traditional Industries and Jobs** Participants shared experiences and lessons learned on breaking down barriers that tend to keep women from entering and succeeding in certain fields. Depending on specific social/cultural contexts – and long-term discrimination— women are restricted or discouraged from applying for or obtaining positions that are traditionally occupied by men. There are also still many fields where, due to exclusion from education and training, women are significantly underrepresented worldwide, such as technology. Participants agreed and cited research showing that an increase in women’s input and representation has a positive impact on teamwork, innovation, product development and more. Participants stressed the important role academic institutions can play in encouraging women to consider non-traditional jobs and expanding the range of work options for women. Similarly, men should not be discouraged from considering positions that have traditionally been held by women.



❖ **Media** Participants discussed the role that local, national and global media can play in raising awareness about the Women’s Empowerment Principles and promoting gender equality. While the media is often accused of perpetuating negative stereotypes, it also has the ability to positively sway public opinion and put pressure on companies to respond to social concerns, such as gender inequality. Some participants suggested that extra effort be made to encourage media companies to sign the CEO Statement of Support. Concerned over the imbalance that exists in the media where the most common aspiration of female characters is” to be royalty and find romance”, Ms. Geena Davis of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media encouraged change. “This portrayal of women contributes to the trend of gender stereotypes,” she said and stressed the need to promote realistic and positive images of females in the media for both men and women of all ages.



❖ **Violence against Women** While often hidden, rarely discussed and difficult to quantify, domestic violence not only disproportionately affects women, it also has a negative impact on a company’s workplace productivity. Interpersonal violence impacts not only those who are victims of it, but also their workplace colleagues. While addressing family violence remains uncharted territory for most companies, companies that have begun to take steps to reduce incidences of such violence and

recognize and treat its effects are reporting positive impacts to the workplace. Representative from Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) reported on the US experience where the recognition of the problem led to a Government-funded interactive website specifically designed to help companies address the issue through policies, information and community resources. See:

<http://www.workplacesrespond.org/> and <http://www.endabuse.org>

❖ **Stock Exchanges** Participants discussed the merits of stock exchanges imposing a gender diversity requirement. For instance, the Australian Stock Exchange recently announced that all listed companies must publicly report their diversity policies and disclose the number of women employees in senior management and on boards. Participants noted that such efforts appropriately move diversity concerns from human resources and CSR departments and make them priorities for the board room.

Promoting Empowerment through Suppliers and Entrepreneurs: Gender Equality and the Value Chain

This session recognized the importance of applying the WEPs throughout the value chain. Participants examined gender-sensitive approaches companies are taking in every part of their interactions with suppliers and entrepreneurs, especially with SMEs. They discussed the use of inclusive business models to enhance economic empowerment of women around the world.



❖ **Moving Gender Equality Down the Supply Chain** As the WEPs outline, it is important for companies to ensure that gender equality is embraced not only within their own companies, but also by those with which they do business. Participants agreed that proactive efforts are necessary to advance gender equality throughout the supply chain. For instance, some companies include a requirement in their contracts with suppliers, asking them to maintain the same quota as the company with regards to sourcing from women owned businesses, or insisting that suppliers report to the company

on their efforts to ensure non-discrimination. Such actions allow companies to diffuse their gender equality guidelines throughout their business networks, enabling the greatest impact.

❖ **Women-Owned Businesses** Participants reported that women-owned businesses, which are often small, lack both the financial and human resources to competitively bid on large supply contracts. However, by forming cooperatives, formerly marginalized people can access the market and successfully bid for large contracts. Companies may also seek to move small women-owned businesses up the supply chain, from third-tier to first-tier suppliers for instance, by providing them with support to meet necessary targets. IBM spoke on that company's supplier diversity programme aimed at extending access to businesses owned by women and ensure that females who have traditionally been excluded from the mainstream are given access to IBM's procurement process.

❖ **Empowering Women, Reducing Poverty** Participants discussed the gender dimension of poverty. Since an estimated 70% of the world's



poor are women, and gender discrimination adversely affects women around the world from owning property, signing contracts or amassing capital, to adequately tackle poverty, effective efforts must be made and resources dedicated to empower women and encourage their economic participation in the market. Participants drew attention to the private sector's role – implementing the WEPs throughout the company's operations and procurement is a vital step. The private sector can also help encourage targeted action by all actors, including business, government and international organizations, to empower and advance women worldwide making the business case for increased economic activity and stability.

Engaging Stakeholders, Building Coalitions:

Participants highlighted the WEPs as a way to bring stakeholders together and work towards a common goal. Company representatives from Brazil spoke on their specific gender equality initiatives within the context of the Brazilian Government's Pro-Gender Equity Plan and the possible application for advancing the WEPs in other countries.

❖ **Engaging Stakeholders via Organized Programmes** Participants recognized the importance of structured programs that act as helpful tools to engage stakeholders and encourage them to help advance the WEPs agenda. Sumitomo Chemical American Inc. introduced an annual CSR report system that tracks and reports annually on achievements made by female employees. The company reported that the policy helped professional morale and noted that the number of female employees increased from 19.1% in 2008 to 22.4% in 2009. Petrobras of Brazil conducts organized gender equality workshops for the human resources department and incorporated an affirmative action policy requiring managers to employ a higher number of women in divisions where they are significantly underrepresented.

❖ **Engaging the Local Community** Panelists acknowledged that business strength and competitive advantage goes hand-in-hand with diversity. However, they also recognized that diversity requires education, research, dedicated effort and investment in long-term initiatives and community-based projects. IBM and others shared how they continue their strategic approach of increasing procurement from and maximizing leadership opportunities for female suppliers through their strategic alliances with the local community. They reported that the key is to engage the local community so that they too, have a vested interest in the issues. They outlined the need to build a sustainable base of community support through outreach programs, training and workshops so that policies and decisions are community-responsive and can help enhance common understanding of gender issues.



❖ **Engaging Stakeholders through Built-In Channel of Communications** Speakers noted that it is important for company heads to become champions of the WEPs, not only in order to attract female talent, but also to foster an inclusive work environment and support innovative development opportunities for gender diversity performance. The group recommended that companies leverage their built-in channels of communications as a means of outreach and dissemination to the local population about issues regarding gender equality. For example, the CEO of Alcatel-Lucent sent out messages to company employees in 130 countries about the need to hire more women.

❖ **Stakeholder Engagement at a National Level - The Role of Government** The panelist from UN Women Brazil, commended the efforts made by the Government of Brazil's public policy initiatives prioritizing gender equality. Brazil's President Lula, in 2003, created a high-level commission of key stakeholders to narrow gender gaps that exist in the public and private employment sector. The government enabled an official forum for stakeholders to reform their employment policies. While the number of women in Congress is still low, 9 out of 28 ministerial positions are held by women in Brazil.

❖ **Partnering with NGOs** The International Trade Centre (ITC) has been an influential actor in bringing the matter of women's empowerment issues to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as a means of creating and supporting markets, by partnering with and empowering women to create an environment that sustains business and healthy communities in the developing world. Women in developing countries often lack access to decent and stable work often due in part to low levels of education and available benefits.



Companies can contribute to improving working conditions in direct operations and supply chains, and can make efforts to attract, retain and advance female employees. Dean's Beans, a coffee producer, collaborates with women coffee grower networks and trade unions to undertake community-identified and -based projects aimed at empowering women workers in the supply chain.

Gender Lens at Work: Including Women on Boards and in Senior Management, Consensus to Accelerate Change:

This session looked around the world at the various efforts to remove discriminatory barriers, highlighting the latest research on inclusion as good business and investment.

❖ **Implementation** Participants discussed the McKinsey finding that 62 percent of senior executives understand the business case for women on boards but only 28 percent have taken any actions to balance board representation by gender. However, it was noted that when governments establish quotas, the pace quickens. In Norway, 40 percent of a company's board of directors must be women. If companies fail to meet this quota there are serious consequences. Due to the emphasis on implementation and measuring the results, all companies met the quota in the allotted time period.

❖ **Mentoring** It is important that women see a role for themselves when they look up the corporate ladder. Ms. Cherie Blair of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women emphasized the need not only to mentor women, but also to champion those with talent and experience to reach the top. Other speakers suggested that both women and men should be mentors for women in the company, and stressed that this can be done virtually to allow for cross-country mentor relationships.



Mentoring leads to the formation of networks of competent, trained women. Another important function for managers, senior and top executives is to be champions of women in the company.



❖ **A Global Outlook** To accelerate action, a number of European countries are following Norway's lead, considering and passing laws requiring that a certain percentage of board seats be filled by women. The European Union is discussing a region-wide quota. In the United States, only 15 percent of board seats are filled by women and the numbers in Asia and the Gulf States are even lower, according to the head of Corporate Women Directors International.

❖ **Misconceptions** Certain misconceptions act as roadblocks to women's empowerment and the prospect of women on boards and in senior management. For instance, since gender equality is being reached in some positions, usually at the entry level, industries often fail to recognize the stark gender inequality that remains towards the top of an organization. Another misconception is the notion that "women are now taking men's jobs". Finally, some suggest that there is a lack of women in senior executive and board positions because there is a shortage of qualified women to fill these roles. These conclusions fail to recognize that in many cases board positions are not advertised, the search process does not leave itself open to women candidates and the search committee itself is not diverse nor inclusive of women.

❖ **Ending Tokenism** Some participants felt that the pace was so slow because too often, corporations sought to address gender equality concerns of stakeholders by appointing one female executive on their board as a symbolic gesture. Inclusion is not a matter of just adding one more person – there needs to be a sufficient number of women on boards and in senior management. Participants supported increased skills training for potential women board members to broaden the candidate pool globally and agreed on the need for qualified women –supported by men – to press for seats on the board and urged a systematic approach to this problem.

Her Excellency Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General



Commending all the companies that are putting the Women's Empowerment Principles into practice, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro highlighted the roles of women in driving economic growth and social progress in communities, countries and companies.

Today, 13 multinational corporations purchase over

\$US 1 billion every year from various suppliers, but only 2.2 percent of that capital goes to female owned businesses. Considering the major contributions female-owned businesses make in the global economy, Dr Migiro stressed the positive impact that can be made if that 2.2 percent would escalate to 22 percent.

The Deputy Secretary-General encouraged businesses to embrace the Women's Empowerment Principles, which in turn can help create an environment that is better for the health of individuals, families and human rights.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS – DAY 2

Behind the Policies—Analyzing Strengths, Identifying Growth Areas, Ordering Priorities: Key Points Summary

❖ **WEPs as a Tool for Awareness Raising on Gender Equality** Many companies have found the WEPs to be a useful tool for raising awareness about gender equality amongst employees. The WEPs highlight the company's position on gender equality and communicate to all employees that gender equality is taken seriously within the organization. Furthermore, the WEPs can also be provided to subsidiaries to communicate the company's gender equality agenda. The



president of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International) identified the WEPs as a top priority and tool for carrying out their vision during the 2011 APEC Women Leaders Network Meeting in Japan and during their outreach efforts with Government representatives in Australia, Turkey and elsewhere.

❖ **Targets** Setting specific targets with concrete time frames can be advantageous for motivating employees to consider gender diversity in their hiring and promotion practices. Targets can be employed to make certain that training is undertaken to ensure that there are enough qualified women candidates for promotion. Target setting can incorporate affirmative action into professional promotion to produce a larger talent pool of women for or establish clear goals so that managers assign more women to areas where women are underrepresented.

❖ **Understanding the Customer** Women constitute a large portion of consumers. By including women throughout all corporate levels, companies have direct access to the opinions and mindsets of a large segment of their consumer base; this in turn ensures that their products are meeting the needs and desires of all their customers. To be a truly global enterprise, companies must understand the diverse needs of both women and minorities.

❖ **Health Care** Participants noted that the different health care needs of women should be addressed, such as, maternal health, training on HIV/AIDS prevention and gender-based violence. By investing in decent employee healthcare that recognizes the specific health care needs of women employees, just as for men, companies realize a return, increased productivity and lower turnover.

❖ **Changing Culture** While implementing equality policies and programmes is an essential step towards achieving gender equity, companies must also exert effort to change workplace culture and context. Even where proactive policies have been established, women are often not applying for upper management positions at comparable rates. Participants noted that the main reason for this is concern amongst women about being able to balance work and family responsibilities. Another central reason women do not take advantage of pro-female policies is concern that the policies are on paper only and that utilizing the policies, such as long periods of maternity leave, will, in reality, negatively impact their career trajectory.



The importance of ensuring that employees will not be penalized for utilizing the policies was emphasized. One way to do this is for women and men in upper management positions to lead by example and take advantage of the benefits and policies available to them that support gender equality. Ms. Cherie Blair told how this played out at 10 Downing Street when her husband was Prime Minister and used paternal leave. Another approach is the incorporation of gender issues into all training seminars. A further step towards changing corporate culture, as well as potentially retaining both female and male talent, is for corporations to critically examine promotion structures that leave very little flexibility for employees to structure their career path according to their particular situation. One example suggested by a participant was the rigid partner track at some law firms, which limited women's ability to reach this level.

The participant from Novartis also noted that researching culture change is normally a sociological project rather than a corporate project, therefore, partnering with academic colleagues on how to best effectuate these changes can be beneficial.

Communicating Impact: Reporting Pioneers Pave the Way

This workshop session brought together global experts on monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

❖ **Reporting** Participants noted that reporting is beneficial for four key reasons: transparency, accountability, change and innovation. Companies that are Global Compact participants should use their annual Communication on Progress to inform their stakeholders on their efforts and progress made related to implementation of the WEPs. By bringing information into the public zone, companies can learn from each other's experiences, successes and failures. By examining others' best practices, companies will be provided with ideas on how to implement the WEPs in a way that makes sense for their specific company based on the company's size, culture and the national laws they operate under. What works best for a 20,000-person company might not work for a 20-person operation. This is why the Principles are designed to be implemented in a flexible manner that permits for adaptation and innovation.



❖ **External Accountability**

Participants stressed the importance of using sex-disaggregated data not only internally, but externally as well. In order to change their culture, companies should engage in a dialogue and compare themselves to similarly situated businesses. Companies often face similar challenges despite where they are located. By operating with transparency, companies can learn from one another to ensure they find the most effective

solutions. It must be noted that external transparency can be more of a challenge for public corporations who are obliged to follow governmental rules and/or laws. Accordingly, it was suggested that it is crucial that these companies use their influence with the government to convince them that making this data publicly available is beneficial to both the corporation and the government.

❖ **Data Sharing** In addition to public disclosure by individual companies, participants also discussed partnering with academic institutions, civil society organizations and Government departments, gathering sex-disaggregated data to show trends and comparisons within and between sectors, regions and companies.

❖ **Closing the Gender Gap** Participants learned that almost 83 percent of the countries that participate in the [World Economic Forum's \(WEF\) gender gap index report](#) are demonstrating progress, while more than 15 percent of countries are falling behind. This year to symbolically address the under representation of women business leaders at the annual Davos Conference, WEF required that one out of every five members of each delegation be a women.

From the Workplace, to the Marketplace, to the Community: Identifying Allies, Shaping Complementary Agendas

❖ **Conflict Areas** Participants recognized the benefits of company efforts to contribute to long-term security and stability in conflict areas through investing in local women owned businesses and building the capacity of female entrepreneurs by connecting them to vital resources.

❖ **Workplace Violence Revisited** Sexual violence has economic, safety and social consequences for businesses, impacting WEPs 2 and 3. It is vital that companies create a culture where employees feel comfortable disclosing information about incidents of violence, by trying to change social norms and dispel biases surrounding these issues. One way to do this is to create a resource center housed within the company. Businesses



do not need to become experts on the issue, they need to recognize that violence is a problem that may be occurring in their workforce and use existing resources from Government and NGOs for policies and responses to best maintain the productivity and safety of those involved.

❖ **Business Call to Action (BtCA)** The BtCA is a partnership of international organizations, including governments, the UNGC and the Clinton Global Initiative. It was launched two years ago by the Secretary General and is hosted by UNDP. BtCA calls on businesses to get involved in supporting the MDGs through implementing core business models which are commercially viable. Instead of donating money or resources to civil society organizations, BtCA participants develop and carry out business models that result in both commercial success and development impact. Many of these ventures are aligned with WEP 5, integrating women into value chains and thereby providing them access to goods and services. By providing financing, training and enterprise development support, these ventures create linkages to companies' supply chains, enabling small businesses, many of them women-owned, to grow and reach new markets that may not have been accessible through traditional distribution systems. Other ventures empowering women include the provision of affordable maternal health services.

❖ **Education is Fundamental** In order to change the workplace and community culture, gender equality principles need to be embedded into the graduate school curriculum so that new entrants into the workforce are already familiar with the issue and understand its importance to a company's success. Just as important is changing the business school culture to be more diverse and inclusive. Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), an initiative inspired by the UN Global Compact, works with business schools and universities worldwide to gradually adapt their curricula, research, teaching methodologies and institutional strategies so they are better equipped to address new business challenges and opportunities related to social responsibility and sustainability. PRME has recently begun to examine how business schools can best incorporate the WEPs. Among the top 10 MBA programs worldwide, female enrollment is only 34 percent, as compared to approximately 50 percent enrollment at comparable law and medical schools. In an effort to change this statistic, PRME has asked faculty from their participating institutions to establish a Working Group to engage on these topics and form good practices on how these issues should be dealt with in business schools.

Note: For information on PRME, how to become a member of the working group, or to be the subject of a company case study, please contact Lisle Ferreira (ferreira@unglobalcompact.org)

❖ **Civil Society Organizations** CSOs can play a key role in helping to build the buy-in of business and government for the WEPs. They can reach out to and mobilize those in their own membership and networks to ensure that the WEPs reach all audiences and develop a wider base. Other key roles they can play include advice and guidance to business on WEP related topics and helping to organize cooperatives of women entrepreneurs.

❖ **Public-Private Partnerships** Last year the UN launched business.un.org to showcase best practices and act as a facilitator in matching UN needs to private sector supply. The website features a repository of partnership stories between UN entities and the private sector in a number of different areas, including women's issues worldwide. It is a great tool for businesses that want to partner with the UN but are unsure how to go about doing so. In the one year that it has been in existence, the site has



already resulted in a partnership between the private sector and UNDP, benefiting female hibiscus farmers in Sudan.

❖ **Networks** Conference participants are leaders in the area of women's empowerment in the workforce. By establishing links among one another participants can share experiences, identify allies and complementary agendas.

Women's Empowerment Principles Year 2: Targeting and Tools

❖ **Systematic Approach** Participants suggested that the WEPs utilize a systematic approach to diverse sectors and geographic regions to build widespread support and a network for change. In order to ensure that the WEPs remain truly global, continued outreach in Africa, Asia and Latin America will be key.

❖ **Platform** The WEPs are a key opportunity to raise awareness of other initiatives and resources across the world on women's empowerment in the workplace. The WEPs team is a small one, so it is crucial that the WEPs operate in a way that adds value, connects and highlights what already exists. The WEPs are designed to form linkages between the various resources and initiatives out there and narrow the gaps between them.

❖ **Benefits** One of the substantial benefits of the WEPs consistently mentioned by participants was that the initiative is housed within the UN and is a partnership between UN Women and the UNGC. Among other benefits, at the policy level, this enables the WEPs team to ensure that the WEPs goals are incorporated into all large UN Conferences and events such as the Least Developed Country (LDC) Conference (Istanbul, May 2011) and Rio+20 (June 2012).

❖ **Stakeholder Input** The WEPs are built on the input of a range of stakeholders and this same input is indispensable for their growth and sustainability. WEPs-organized webinars foster conversation and exchange on implementation approaches, lessons and challenges. Peers offer remarkable resources – see participant list at:

http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/WEPs/2011/Participant_List.pdf



❖ **Brainstorming Ideas** The Conference made clear the dedication and passion of all participants for this issue. Participants suggested ideas for how to expand the reach of the WEPs: e.g. creating a structured dialogue with investors through Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI); organizing by principles (e.g. WEP 5 on the supply chain) and/or sector (e.g. technology or engineering) and forming working groups; targeting media companies to sign the statement of support for the WEPs; standardizing reporting; calling on Local Networks to

encourage UNGC signatories to embed the WEPs at a country level; coordinating initiatives among themselves; engaging in dialogue with governments regarding the provision of incentives for companies who adhere to the principles; incorporating training and education programs in the implementation of

company initiatives; utilizing regional programs to share experiences about the WEPs in order to encourage others to sign on; and examining strategies for reaching rural women and NGOs.

Investors and Gender Equality as Management Indicator: Looking Closer, Speaking Louder

❖ **Outside Accountability Mechanism** There is a lot of talk about how the media acts as an outside accountability mechanism; investors should be seen in a similar light. Large institutional investors can write directly to the CEOs in regards to women's representation, encouraging company leaders to improve their diversity practices. Once a channel of communication has been established, institutional investors can share examples of best practices so that companies can see concrete examples of how these policies and initiatives have benefited other companies fiscally. Additionally, investors can act as external support for those individuals within the company that understand and embrace the business case for gender diversity.

❖ **Security Exchange Commissions (SECs)** Governments can include diversity components in their regulations for publicly listed companies. SECs can utilize their reporting requirements to force the issue of diversity into the boardroom. An example of this is the SEC in the United States, which requires publicly listed companies to disclose whether or not they have a diversity policy and has recently added the additional requirement of disclosing who a company has placed on its board and why.

❖ **Shareholder Proposals** Investors can utilize shareholder proposals to put forward diversity measures. However, this does not seem to be done often outside of the United States and even when it is done, the proposals are often withdrawn before the shareholder meeting due to negotiations taking place behind the scenes. This approach needs to be strengthened.

❖ **Investor Indices** A bright spot in embedding gender diversity into investor concerns are investor indices. Many of them, including the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and FTSE, look at the number of female employees.

❖ **Advisory Votes** A few countries can vote on how much to pay management based on indicators on the success of companies. We have yet to see a movement pushing for an advisory vote on women, whether in regards to disclosure or a certain percentage of representation.

❖ **Band Together** Large mutual funds and other investors can band together and withhold votes from all slates of boards that include no women.

❖ **Short Term vs Long Term** Mainstream investors have yet to truly embrace the business case behind gender diversity and equity. Some of the reasons for this include investor focus on short-term profit as compared to long-term value; institutional investors drowning out the voices of retail holders; many large investors are run by men who might not care about the issue; there is a strong herd instinct among investors that causes them to shy away from trying different approaches and leads them to not ask for information on gender equality and diversity; and a large percentage work for private companies, particularly private equity, and therefore do not have to listen to the wants and/or needs of the public.

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Presentations and remarks from the event are available at:

http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/equality_means_business.html