WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS

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.



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THE GLOBAL COMPACT

United Nations Global Compact

United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNIFEM

Introduction

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to:

- Build strong economies;
- Establish more stable and just societies;
- Achieve internationally-agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights;
- Improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities; and
- Propel businesses' operations and goals.

Yet, ensuring the inclusion of women's talents, skills, experience and energies requires intentional actions and deliberate policies. The Women's Empowerment Principles provide a set of considerations to help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.

Enhancing openness and inclusion throughout corporate policies and operations requires techniques, tools and practices that bring results. The Women's Empowerment Principles, forged through an international multi-stakeholder consultative process led by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), provide a "gender lens" through which business can survey and analyze current initiatives, benchmarks and reporting practices.

Informed by real-life business practices, the Principles help companies tailor existing policies and practices —or establish needed new ones— to realize women's empowerment. The Principles also reflect the interests of governments and civil society and will support interactions among stakeholders as achieving gender equality requires the participation of all actors. As a leader in gender equality, UNIFEM brings three decades of experience to this partnership effort with the UN Global Compact, the world's largest corporate citizenship initiative with more than 7,000 business participants and other stakeholders involved in more than 135 countries.

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, utilizing all social and economic assets is crucial for success. Yet, despite progress, women continue to confront discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, even though equality between men and women stands as a universal international precept—a fundamental and inviolable human right. Nearly all countries have affirmed this value through their recognition of the standards contained in international human rights treaties, which articulate for states a broad range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Distinctive documents highlight a spectrum of state responsibilities and human rights protections for women, indigenous peoples, children, workers and people with disabilities. Additionally, internationally agreed-on documents such as the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by all 189 countries at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and the Millennium Declaration adopted by 189 countries in 2000, contribute to the overarching human rights framework.[1]

These international standards illuminate our common aspiration for a life where the doors of opportunity are open to all. Where people can live free from violence, exercise legal redress and expect states to live up to their obligations to respect and protect the human rights of women, men and children and provide appropriate government services such as education and health.

These conventions inform national law and help shape common values adopted by institutions throughout the world. Business leaders, working in close association with their peers, with governments, nongovernmental organizations and the United Nations[2], seek to apply these international standards that uphold an individual's rights through their specifically designed policies and programmes. Their corporate commitment, reflected through the company's mission statement and supported through public reporting on policies and practices, attests to the growing realization of how important these values are to business and their communities.[3]

While much has been accomplished through the integration of principles and actions on corporate responsibility, diversity and inclusion, the full participation of women throughout the private sector – from the CEO's office

to the factory floor to the supply chain – remains unfulfilled. Current research demonstrating that gender diversity helps business perform better signals that self interest and common interest can come together. UNIFEM, the UN Global Compact, other leading UN agencies, the World Bank and the World Economic Forum, reinforce the findings.[4] Governments also recognize that women's inclusion drives development, and acknowledge that achieving the Millennium Development Goals and national economic and development plans requires rapidly moving towards gender equality.[5]

In a globally interdependent political, social and economic environment, partnerships play an increasingly vital role to:

- Create a vibrant business environment involving a broad partnership of actors, enablers, contributors and innovators to open opportunities for women and men; and
- Enable the active and interactive participation of governments, international financial institutions, the private sector, investors, nongovernmental organizations, academia and professional organizations to work together.

In the spirit of partnership, UNIFEM and the UN Global Compact offer the Women's Empowerment Principles in the hope that using them as a targeted "gender lens" inspires and intensifies the efforts to bring women in at all levels. *Equality does mean business.*



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Women's Empowerment

1 Leadership Promotes Gender Equality

- Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights.
- Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers' performance reviews.
- Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality.
- Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion.

2 Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Nondiscriminiation

- Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men.
- Ensure that workplace policies and practices are free from gender-based discrimination.
- Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors.
- Assure sufficient participation of women – 30% or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas.
- Offer flexible work options, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status.
- Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men.

3 Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence

- Taking into account differential impacts on women and men, provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health.
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical abuse and prevent sexual harassment.
- Strive to offer health insurance or other needed services – including for survivors of domestic violence – and ensure equal access for all employees.
- Respect women and men workers' rights to time off for medical care and counseling for themselves and their dependents.
- In consultation with employees, identify and address security issues, including the safety of women traveling to and from work and on company-related business.
- Train security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women and understand laws and company policies on human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation.

Principles

4 Education and Training

- Invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for advancement of women at all levels and across all business areas, and encourage women to enter nontraditional job fields.
- Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes, including literacy classes, vocational and information technology training.
- Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring.
- Offer opportunities to promote the business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men as well as women.

5 Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices

- Expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises, including small businesses, and women entrepreneurs.
- Support gender-sensitive solutions to credit and lending barriers.
- Ask business partners and peers to respect the company's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion.
- Respect the dignity of women in all marketing and other company materials.
- Ensure that company products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation.

6 Community Leadership and Engagement

- Lead by example – showcase company commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion.
- Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls.
- Promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure sufficient representation of women in any community consultation.
- Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights.

7 Transparency, Measuring and Reporting

- Make public the company policies and implementation plan for promoting gender equality.
- Establish benchmarks that quantify inclusion of women at all levels.
- Measure and report on progress, both internally and externally, using data disaggregated by sex.
- Incorporate gender markers into ongoing reporting obligations.

Principles into Practice:

Companies from around the world already furnish concrete examples of how they advance women's empowerment. The samples that follow, matched to each of the seven distinct Women's Empowerment Principles, showcase actions and policies to learn from and emulate; they derive from the large collection of company-submitted examples entitled, *Companies Leading the Way: Putting the Principles into Practice.*

1 Leadership Promotes Gender Equality

- An international mining group headquartered in the UK, commissioned a resource guide on how to reach out and engage women and community groups as a major policy directive of its business operations.
- A company assessment at the highest level by a global accounting and consulting firm determined that the company was losing out on business by failing to attract and retain highly skilled female professionals and, on the basis of these findings, worked to change company culture and policies through leadership and board involvement.
- The leadership of an East Asian apparel manufacturer implemented an integrated, comprehensive approach to women's empowerment through programmes recognizing female employees' accomplishments and supporting women's advancement in the company through wide-ranging education, training and safety initiatives.

2 Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Nondiscrimination

- To retain and attract more qualified women, an Eastern European microfinance group initiated a broad-based data collection and analysis exercise, followed up with recommendations on the treatment of its female employees.
- In an effort to close gender-based pay gaps, a global insurance group dedicated 1.25 million Euros over three years.
- A large financial services company in Australia offers a parental leave policy that provides a total of two years parental leave for the primary care giver, which can be taken flexibly, rather than on a full-time basis.
- To support diversity and inclusion, a multinational steel company established a special committee comprised of management and women workers that identifies concerns of female employees and in response organizes trainings and programmes.

3 Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence

- Building on a company-initiated study to determine the economic benefits to companies of employee health awareness, a large apparel company partners with health education professionals to offer trainings to employees on reproductive and maternal health, disease prevention and access to care.
- Recognizing the need to support working parents, a Kenyan communications company offers free on-site day care and an in-house physician, in addition to comprehensive medical coverage that includes pre- and post-natal care.
- Two Spanish companies offer victims of domestic violence job placement services specifically tailored to their needs to ease transition to the workplace.
- A Sri Lankan apparel manufacturer demonstrates its commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment – and recognition of the differential needs of its female and male employees – through a range of targeted policies and programmes, including special care for pregnant employees, and systematic risk assessments and monitoring of its plants, processes and equipment.

Company Examples

4 Education and Training

- To open opportunities for women's career advancement in IT fields, a US-based multinational technology company maintains strategic partnerships with women's organizations in many of the countries where it operates, to promote education and training and recognize women's accomplishments in IT.
- A large European airline company reaches out to youth through education projects to break down the barriers that traditionally limit women to certain jobs in the industry and men to others.
- A large financial services company in Australia offers numerous initiatives aimed at supporting women in business, including an online platform to help Australian women connect with other women in business internationally to share information, research and career advice.
- A Chinese international transport company established female employee committees to identify and design programmes and information tailored to the needs and special interests of female employees.



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5 Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices

- Recognizing the expanding role of women entrepreneurs, a large UK-based bank launched specialized financial services, microfinance opportunities and business loans and also provides an online resource center for women entrepreneurs running small and medium-sized enterprises.
- A Swedish manufacturer helps women producers of raw materials in developing countries to trade directly with the manufacturer, thus improving their income by reducing the number of intermediaries in the supply chain.
- To make the scope of violence against women visible to an international public, a global advertising company partnered with a UN organization to develop a public awareness campaign using television and the Internet.

6 Community Leadership and Engagement

- A large international cosmetics company launched and sold products to raise funds for community-based organizations working to end domestic violence around the world.
- A multinational mining company with operations in Ghana implemented a gender mainstreaming programme to encourage female employees to assume greater responsibility within the mine and connect to the local community.
- A US-based multinational apparel manufacturer awards grants to community-based organizations working to empower women in localities where it does business.

7 Transparency, Measuring and Reporting

- A mid-sized Israeli fashion company became the first of its size in Israel to voluntarily disclose a Social and Environmental Responsibility Report reflecting its commitment to gender equality.
- A Spanish financial institution publicizes its commitment to equal opportunity and inclusion on its website and regularly undergoes external equality diagnostics validated by an autonomous government body.
- A South African mining company includes a detailed breakdown of employment by gender and race per occupational level in its sustainability reporting.

How to Make & Measure

The following suggestions align with each of the seven Women's Empowerment Principles and indicate approaches on how to make and measure progress. However, the most powerful assessment tools derive from an organization's own culture and objectives, matched with a clear measurement framework. While we share common goals, the routes to get there will, by necessity, be diverse.

1 Leadership Promotes Gender Equality

Define clearly company's strategic case for advancing gender equality within the organization and in its field.

Establish a high-level task force to identify priority areas, establish benchmarks and monitor company progress.

Include company-wide goals for progress towards for gender equality in job descriptions and performance reviews.

THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Is the stated commitment to advancing equality and promoting nondiscrimination and fairness prominently featured on the company's website and in company recruiting materials and corporate sustainability reports?
- Is there a designated board-level individual who champions the organization's gender equality policies and plans?
- Are there trainings, including for male leaders, on the importance of women's participation and inclusion?
- Does the company's annual report or sustainability report include leadership statements on reaching gender equality goals?

2 Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Nondiscrimination

Prominently publicize an explicit company statement that prohibits gender-based discrimination in hiring, retention policies, promotion, salaries and benefits.

Design recruitment initiatives that reach out to more women.

Review and analyze remuneration of all employees by gender, employee category and job title.

Ensure equal opportunities for women to lead on important assignments and task forces.

Survey employees to elicit the views of women and men towards company policies on equal opportunity, inclusion, nondiscrimination and retention.

Establish and implement a confidential grievance policy and procedure for incidents of discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Is there a gender breakdown of the company's board of directors and top management?
- Does the company track and analyze promotions by gender, employee category and title?
- Are fair pay reviews conducted on a regular basis?
- Are sufficient numbers of women – 30 percent or greater – being recruited and interviewed? Do interview panels have sufficient numbers of women participating?
- What is the retention rate for female employees by employee category and job title compared to male employees?
- Has the company designed flexible work options that incorporate the specific and different needs of women and men?
- Are there accessible channels for filing grievances on gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence?

3 Health, Safety, and Freedom from Violence

Prominently publicize the company's zero tolerance policy and provide ongoing training.

Undertake a gender sensitive inventory of health and safety conditions.

Survey employees to elicit the views of women and men on health, safety and security issues.

Tailor company health and safety policies to serve the distinctive concerns and needs of women and men, including pregnant women, people with HIV/AIDS, physically challenged and other vulnerable groups and provide the resources to implement them.

THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Is safety and other equipment the appropriate size for both women and men?
- Are there separate toilets and, if necessary, changing facilities for both women and men?

Progress

- Are company grounds adequately lit?
- Are female health care professionals available in company-provided health services?

4 Education and Training

Train and educate employees, particularly male staff, on the company's business case for women's empowerment.

Offer career clinics and mentoring programmes for women's career development at all stages.

Promote training programmes tailored for women.

THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- What is the distribution between women and men of training and professional development opportunities?
- How many hours of training do women and men participate in annually, analyzed by job category and title?
- Are the demands of employees' family roles considered when scheduling trainings and education programmes?

5 Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices

Prominently publicize an executive level policy statement on the organization's support for gender equality practices in its supply chain.

Identify a 'women's enterprise champion' within the organization to target women-owned enterprises and help develop their capacity to become quality suppliers.

Request from current and potential suppliers information on their gender and diversity policies and include these in criteria for business selection.

THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Does the company perform analyses of its existing supply chain to establish the baseline number of suppliers that are women-owned enterprises?
- How many of the company's suppliers have gender equality policies and programmes?
- What is the ratio of women-owned enterprises compared to other suppliers?
- How does the company record complaints regarding its portrayal of women and girls in marketing and other public materials, and how are these concerns acted on?

6 Community Leadership and Engagement

Define company community engagement initiatives that empower women and girls.

Encourage company executives to undertake community consultations with local leaders –women and men—to establish strong ties and programmes that benefit all community members.



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Craft a community impact analysis that marks the specific impacts on women and girls when establishing or expanding presence in a community.

THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- What initiatives are supported by the company to promote equality in the community and how many women and girls, men and boys do they reach?
- Does the company survey participants through focus groups or written comments for feedback?
- Does the company review its criteria and policies that determine community engagement activities against results and community feedback?
- Are women's contributions to their communities recognized and publicized?

7 Transparency, Measuring and Reporting

Report annually, by department, on company's gender equality plans and policies, using established benchmarks.

Publicize findings on company's efforts towards inclusion and advancing women through all appropriate channels and pre-existing reporting obligations.

Include monitoring and evaluation of company's gender equality goals into ongoing performance indicators.

THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Does tracking along the benchmarks for advancing women demonstrate that the company is moving positively?
- What opportunities exist throughout the company for review, analysis and discussion of performance?

Where Women Stand: Facts and Figures

Women at Risk

- More people have been lifted out of poverty in the last 50 years than in the previous 500; yet more than 1.2 billion still subsist on less than $1 per day.[1] According to some estimates, women represent 70% of the world's poor.
- The International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD) reports that in the developing world, the percentage of land owned by women is less than 2%.[2]
- According to U.S. Government-sponsored research completed in 2006, approximately 800,000 people are trafficked across national borders annually. Approximately 80% of transnational trafficking victims are women and girls and up to 50% are minors.[3]
- An estimated 72% of the world's 33 million refugees are women and children.[4]
- Every minute somewhere in the world a woman dies due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth.[5]

Violence against Women

- The most common form of violence experienced by women globally is physical violence inflicted by an intimate partner. On average, at least 6 out of 10 women are beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused by an intimate partner in the course of their lifetime.[6]
- It is estimated that, worldwide, 1 in 5 women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.[7]
- Women experience sexual harassment throughout their lives. Between 40% and 50% of women in the European Union reported some form of sexual harassment in the workplace.[8]
- The cost of intimate partner violence in the United States alone exceeds US$5.8 billion per year: US$4.1 billion is for direct medical and health care services, while productivity losses account for nearly US$1.8 billion.[9]
- In Canada, a 1995 study estimated the annual direct costs of violence against women to be approximately Can$1.17 billion a year. A 2004 study in the United Kingdom estimated the total direct and indirect costs of domestic violence, including pain and suffering, to be £23 billion per year or £440 per person.[10]

Women and HIV/AIDS

- The AIDS epidemic has a unique impact on women, exacerbated by their role within society and their biological vulnerability to HIV infection – more than half of the estimated 33 million people living with HIV worldwide are women.[11]
- The prevalence of violence and of HIV/AIDS is interrelated. Women's inability to negotiate safe sex and refuse unwanted sex is closely linked to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Women who are beaten by their partners are 48% more likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS[12].

Spotlight on Women and Productivity

- When women are afforded the equality of opportunity that is their basic human right, the results are striking. In 2006, *The Economist* estimated that over the past decade, women's work has contributed more to global growth than China.[13]
- If Japan raised its share of working women to American levels, it would boost annual growth by 0.3% over 20 years, according to *The Economist*.[14]
- In 2007, Goldman Sachs reported that different countries and regions of the world could dramatically increase GDP simply by reducing the gap in employment rates between men and women: the Eurozone could increase GDP by 13%; Japan by 16%; the US by 9%.[15]

Women and Education

- About two-thirds of the estimated 776 million adults – or 16% of the world's adult population – who lack basic literacy skill are women.[16] In developing countries, nearly 1 out of 5 girls who enrolls in primary school does not complete her primary education.
- The Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) estimates that worldwide, for every year beyond fourth grade that girls attend school, wages rise 20%, child deaths drop 10% and family size drops 20%.[17]

Gender Terms

Empowerment
Empowerment means that people - both women and men – can take control over their lives: set their own agendas, gain skills (or have their own skills and knowledge recognized), increase self-confidence, solve problems, and develop self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcome.

Gender
Gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Whereas biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them.

Sex
Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive as there are individuals who possess both, but these characteristics generally differentiate humans as females and males.

Gender Equality
Gender equality describes the concept that all human beings, both women and men, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male.

Gender Equity
Gender equity means that women and men are treated fairly according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.

Gender Perspective/ "Gender Lens"
A gender perspective/"gender lens" can be defined as a focus that brings a framework of analysis in order to assess how women and men affect and are affected differently by policies, programmes, projects and activities. It enables recognition that relationships between women and men can vary depending on the context. A gender perspective takes into account gender roles, social and economic relationships and needs, access to resources, and other constraints and opportunities imposed by society or culture, age, religion, and/or ethnicity on both women and men.

Gender Analysis
Gender analysis is a systematic examination of the different impacts of development, policies, programmes and legislation on women and men that entails, first and foremost, collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the population concerned. Gender analysis can also include the examination of the multiple ways in which women and men, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.

Gender-Sensitive Indicator
An indicator is a pointer. It can be a measurement, a number, a fact, an opinion or a perception that focuses on a specific condition or situation, and measures changes in that condition or situation over time. The difference between an indicator and a statistic is that indicators should involve comparison with a norm. Gender-sensitive indicators measure gender-related changes in society over time; they provide a close look at the results of targeted gender-based initiatives and actions.

Sex-Disaggregated Data
Sex-disaggregated data can be defined as data that is collected and presented separately on women and men. It is quantitative statistical information on the differences and inequalities between women and men. There is widespread confusion over, and misuse of, the terms "gender-disaggregated data" and "sex-disaggregated data". Data should necessarily be sex-disaggregated but not gender-disaggregated since females and males are counted according to their biological difference and not according to their social behaviours. The term gender-disaggregated data is frequently used, but it should be understood as sex-disaggregated data.

Gender Mainstreaming
Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between women and men is not perpetuated.

SOURCES: United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), 2004; UNESCO GENIA Toolkit for Promoting Gender Equality in Education; and ITC-ILO Training Module: Introduction to Gender Analysis and Gender-Sensitive Indicators Gender Campus, 2009

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1] Gender equality has been recognized as a human right since the establishment of the United Nations.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the 1976 international convenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) all contain clear statements on the right of women to be free from discrimination. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the General Assembly in 1979, obliges signatories to undertake actions to ensure gender equality in both the private and public spheres and to eliminate traditional stereotyped ideas on the roles of the sexes. Importantly, governments at the 1995 Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, laid out specific actions set to attain the equality and empowerment standards set by CEDAW, in the Beijing Platform for Action. For more information on legal instruments and other relevant international standards of particular importance to women's human rights and gender equality, including CEDAW and other treaty bodies, see: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm.

[2] Employees' and workers' rights are addressed by numerous international standards, conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO). While ILO instruments are applicable to both women and men, there are a number which are of specific interest for women workers. See the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality and the ILO Library online Resource Guide – Gender Equality in the World of Work: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/resource/subject/gender.htm.

Founded in 2000, the UN Global Compact is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. See: www.unglobalcompact.org.

In 2005 the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Professor John Ruggie as Special Representative on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The mandate includes identifying and clarifying standards of corporate responsibility and accountability with regard to human rights. https://www.un.org/.

[3] Over the past 10 years, there has been an increase in business' attention to corporate responsibility and sustainability reporting through a variety of mechanisms. One example is the UN Global Compact requirement on annual Communications on Progress (see: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/COP/index.html). Another example is the global sustainability reporting framework developed by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which sets out principles and indicators that organizations can use to measure and report their economic, environmental and social performance. In 2008-09, the GRI worked with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) on a research and consultation project aimed at addressing the gap between gender and sustainability reporting, culminating in the resource document, Embedding Gender in Sustainability Reporting, a practitioner's guide to help organizations worldwide create opportunities for women, adopt best practices in sustainability reporting, and improve companies' bottom lines. See: http://www.globalreporting.org/CurrentPriorities/GenderandReporting/.

A recent report (January 2010) by McKinsey & Company, 'The Business of Empowering Women', presents a case for why and how the private sector can intensify its engagement in the economic empowerment of women in developing countries and emerging markets. The report draws on insights from interviews with more than 50 leaders and experts in the private and social sectors who focus on women's empowerment, as well as findings from a global survey of nearly 2,300 senior private sector executives, among others. See: http://www.mckinsey.com/clientservice/Social_Sector/our_practices/Economic_Development/Knowledge_Highlights/empowering_women.aspx.

Research by the London Business School Centre for Women in Business found that gender parity in teams leads to more innovation, making a clear business case for diversity. See 'Innovative Potential: Men and Women in Teams, 2007, available at: http://www.london.edu/assets/documents/facultyandresearch/Innovative_Potential_NOV_2007.pdf.

[4] Additional examples supporting the business case for gender equality include two recent studies on gender diversity and corporate performance by McKinsey and Company, conducted in partnership with the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society. Their research demonstrated the link between the presence of women in corporate management teams and companies' organizational and financial performance, suggesting that the companies where women are most strongly represented at board or top-management level are also the companies that perform best. Further research on female leadership showed that behaviors more often applied by women reinforce a company's organizational performance on several dimensions, and will be critical to meet the expected challenges companies will face over the coming years. See 'Women Matter: Gender diversity, a corporate performance driver' (2007) and 'Women Matter 2: Female leadership, a competitive edge for the future' (2008).

For research and resources of the Women Leaders and Gender Parity Programme of the World Economic Forum, see http://www.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/index.htm. For information on the World Bank's work on gender, including Gender Equality as Smart Economics – a World Bank Group Action Plan, see: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,menuPK:336874~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:336868,00.html

[5] The "multiplier effect" of gender equality has been increasingly acknowledged. Studies continue to show that lowering the social, economic and political barriers faced by women and girls extends education, decreases child mortality and vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. Women's greater labour force participation reduces poverty through increased productivity and earnings. Conversely, systematic discrimination against women and girls will make it impossible for many to meet the poverty and other targets of the Millennium Development Goals. Millennium Development Goal 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women, and is one of eight MDGs drawn from the Millennium Declaration, that was adopted by 189 Governments in 2000. The MDGs address the world's main development challenges, and have time-bound and measurable targets accompanied by indicators for monitoring progress, with a timeline for achievement by 2015. Growing concern that the MDGs will not be met is accompanied by growing recognition that achievement of gender equality is critical to achievement of all other MDGs. See: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/ and http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2008/MDG_Gender_Progress_Chart_2008_En.pdf. See also, 'The Importance of Sex', *The Economist*, April 2006; and 'Financing Gender Equality is Financing Development', UNIFEM Discussion Paper, 2008.

WHERE WOMEN STAND: FACTS AND FIGURES

[1] Women's Funding Network. 2007. World Poverty Day: Investing in Women – Solving the poverty puzzle. Poverty Statistics. Available from: http://www.wfnet.org/sites/wfnet.org/files/jenn/Poverty%20Statistics.doc.

[2] IFAD website (fact sheet on women), accessed 27 February 2009: http://www.ifad.org/pub/factsheet/women/women_e.pdf

[3] USAID website, accessed 27 February 2009: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/wid_stats.html.

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The Women's Empowerment Principles partnership team consists of:

Joan Libby-Hawk,
Public Affairs Chief, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Laraine Mills,
Partnerships and Donor Relations Consultant, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Ursula Wynhoven,
Head, Policy & Legal and Special Assistant to the Executive Director, UN Global Compact Office

Lauren Gula,
Human Rights Consultant,
UN Global Compact Office

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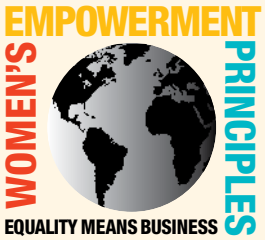

"The Women's Empowerment Principles are subtitled *Equality Means Business* because the full participation of women benefits business, and indeed, all of us. Informed by leading businesses' policies and practices from different sectors and around the world, the Principles offer a practical approach to advance women, and point the way to a future that is both more prosperous and more fair for everyone."

GEORG KELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT OFFICE

"As corporations are key players in the global economy they can and must play a vital role in securing and protecting women's rights and unleashing women's economic capacity. More than ever before, private sector leadership is essential. Because corporations affect capital flows, employ so many people and affect so many communities, they can exert tremendous influence and they can set an example."

INÉS ALBERDI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNIFEM

Launched in 2000, the United Nations Global Compact is both a policy platform and a practical framework for companies that are committed to sustainability and responsible business practices. As a multi-stakeholder leadership initiative, it seeks to align business operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption and to catalyze actions in support of broader UN goals. With over 7,000 signatories in more than 135 countries, it is the world's largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative.
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United Nations Global Compact

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