



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



The role of business

Gender equality is a fundamental and inviolable human right and women's and girls' empowerment is essential to expand economic growth, promote social development and enhance business performance. The full incorporation of women's capacities into labor forces would add percentage points to most national growth rates – double digits in many cases. Further, investing in women's empowerment produces the double dividend of benefiting women and children, and is pivotal to the health and social development of families, communities and nations.

Empowering women and girls and achieving gender equality requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including business. All companies have baseline responsibilities to respect human rights, including the rights of women and girls. Beyond these baseline responsibilities, companies also have the opportunity to support the empowerment of women and girls through core business, social investment, public policy engagement and partnerships. As the engine for 90 percent of jobs in developing countries, technological innovation, capital creation and investment, responsible business is critical to the advancement of women's and girls' empowerment around the world. With a growing business case, private sector leaders are increasingly developing and adapting policies and practices, and implementing cutting edge initiatives, to advance women's empowerment within their workplaces, marketplaces and communities. The launch of the SDGs in September provides a tremendous opportunity for companies to further align their strategies and operations with global priorities by mainstreaming gender equality into all areas of corporate sustainability and systematically and strategically scaling up actions which support the development and livelihoods of women and girls.

Key business themes addressed by this SDG

- Equal remuneration for women and men
- Diversity and equal opportunity
- Access to sexual and reproductive health-care services
- Workplace violence and harassment
- Women in leadership
- Childcare services and benefits

Examples of key business actions and solutions

The below examples are non-exhaustive and some may be more relevant to certain industries than to others.

- Assure sufficient participation of women – 30% or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas.
- Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men.
- Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men.
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal/ and/ or physical abuse and prevent sexual harassment.
- Expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises, including small businesses and women entrepreneurs.

Examples of key business indicators

- The Women's Empowerment Principles- Reporting on Progress: What is the business' policy on maternity, paternity and family leave length and entitlements and to what extent does this go above the statutory provisions in the regulatory regime where the business is operating? Do these policies apply throughout the operations in each country? Are sex-disaggregated statistics kept and tracked?



- The Women's Empowerment Principles- Reporting on Progress: Does the business have an explicit, well-publicized policy of zero tolerance towards gender-based violence and harassment? Is there a confidential complaint procedure?
- GRI G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, G4-LA1: Total number and rates of new employee hires and employee turnover by age group, gender, and region
- GRI G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, G4-LA12: Composition of governance bodies and breakdown of employees per employee category according to gender, age group, minority group membership, and other indicators of diversity
- GRI G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, G4-LA13: Ratio of basic salary and remuneration of women to men by employee category, by significant locations of operation
- GRI G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, G4-DMA-b Guidance for Procurement Practices: Describe policies and practices used to promote economic inclusion when selecting suppliers. Forms of economic inclusion may include: suppliers owned by women; suppliers owned or staffed by members of vulnerable, marginalized or underrepresented social groups; and small and medium sized suppliers

The complete overview of business indicators can be found at www.sdgcompass.org

Examples of key business tools

- Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB)
- Gender Equality Principles self-assessment
- Impact Reporting & Investment Standards (IRIS)
- Social Hotspots Database/ Portal (SHDB)
- UN Global Compact- Oxfam Poverty Footprint
- Understand and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment

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The SDG targets

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws
- 5.b. Enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment
- 5.c. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

